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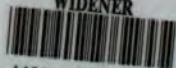
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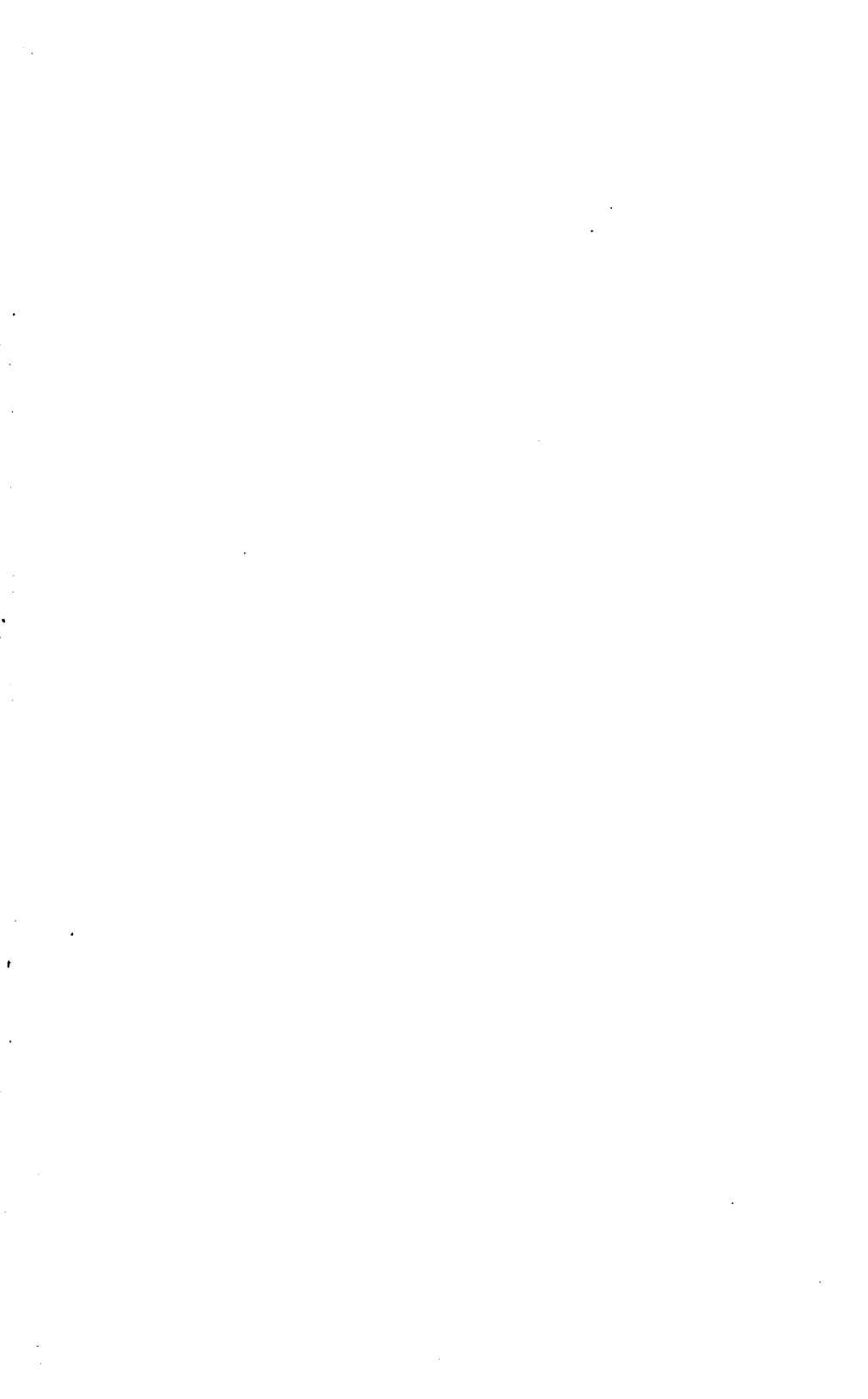
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ADMIRALTY ADMINISTRATION

LONDON

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ADMIRALTY ADMINISTRATION

ITS FAULTS AND DEFAULTS

SECOND EDITION

REVISED

(WITH A POSTSCRIPT)

LONDON

LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN, AND ROBERTS

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PREFACE.

THE principle of publicity with respect to Naval affairs has been so completely established by the unreserved statements of members of the Board of Admiralty in Parliament, as well as by the publication of the Reports of all Commissions of Naval Inquiry, some spoken of by the Government when appointed as strictly confidential, that no new information can be given, or facts stated, which have not already been before the country in some official or authentic shape.

But these revelations on a variety of unfamiliar subjects, made separately and at considerable intervals, have almost necessarily failed to convey any satisfactory general view either of the state of the Navy, or of the system by which it is governed, while the endless differences of opinion among professional men, and the want of any intelligible principle in Naval Administration, have led to the habit of regarding the Navy as a subject apart from all ordinary

knowledge, involving a maze of technicalities and contradictions not to be unravelled by inexperienced persons.

Hence it has arisen that matters of the most momentous interest to the country are often discussed in the House of Commons under the constant apprehension of a count-out, for naval questions act as a general signal for a rush to the doors, and the Government whip on no occasions finds it more difficult to keep a House together. Yet strange to say, no instance is known to have occurred of the office of First Lord, or of Secretary of the Admiralty having ever been declined for the excellent reason of a total want of knowledge of naval affairs; stranger still, after a very short time, what was recently held to be incomprehensible, is supposed to be so thoroughly mastered and understood, that naval opinions are often treated with considerable contempt, as altogether superfluous.

Even with the best intentions, a short tenure of office can never enable a civilian to gain more than a very imperfect knowledge of naval affairs, more especially as constant labour is required to enable him to understand something of the matters which are hourly pressing for his decision; hence it follows that even those who have held the highest offices in the Admiralty can seldom, if ever, obtain such a complete knowledge of the subject as to enable them to form a distinct general estimate of the

merits or demerits of the system they have superintended, and this can alone account for the long course of years during which it has continued in its present state, without any attempt to reform it from within.

With respect to naval officers the case is not more encouraging, for the only one subject on which there is general agreement amongst them, is the utter hopelessness of any good result arising from a system which is felt to hang like a blight over the Navy. And yet the officer who was eloquent on the subject yesterday, becomes perhaps to-morrow a member of the Board, and possibly from supposing that what failed in other hands may succeed when he has a share in its management, his views often change with marvellous rapidity, and if a word is said against the system, he will defend it as if he had always considered it the perfection of human wisdom.

Besides these obstacles to a sound judgment being formed on questions so important, there is the traditional confidence which inclines all who do not inquire for themselves, (and who does inquire for himself on this subject?) to rest in the secure belief that the British Navy is the *ne plus ultra* of efficiency; the danger however becomes formidable if such confidence rests on insufficient grounds, particularly when it is shared by public men having the best opportunities, if they would but use them, of forming juster conclusions.

Under these circumstances it appears that facts collected in such a shape as to show in one view the principles on which naval affairs are conducted, and the results of the mode of administration as proved by the actual condition of the first great essentials of a Navy, Ships and Seamen, would be of great value in enabling the country to judge whether or no our Navy would be effective in great emergencies in due proportion either to our vast expenditure or to our great requirements in the way of maritime defence, and whether it would approach the amount reasonably to be expected, comparing our immense materials of naval strength with our available resources.

The Author conceives that no subject can surpass this in importance to his country, and he entertains the strongest conviction that great perils must eventually ensue if any very erroneous estimate of our real condition should prevail much longer.

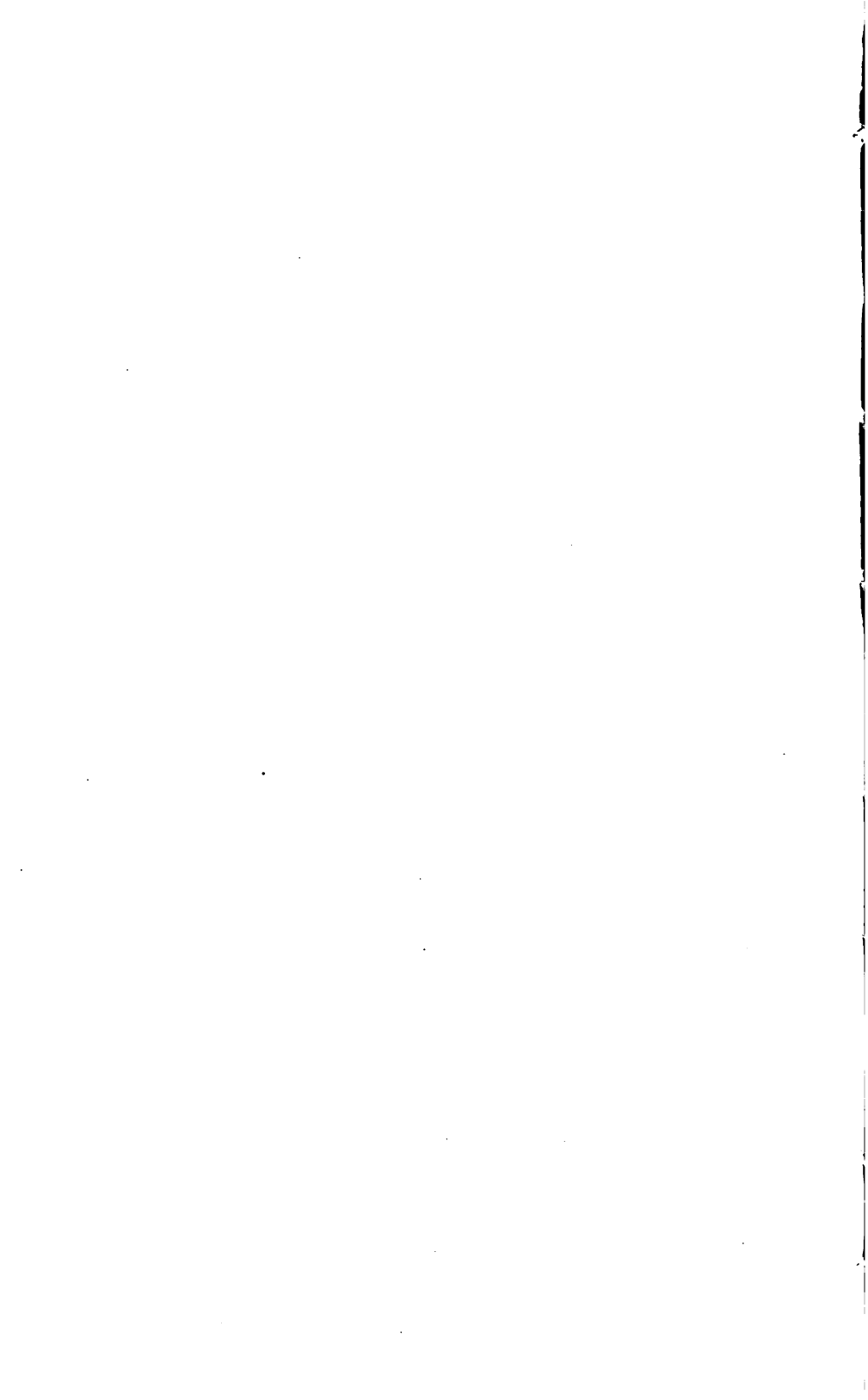
He is so deeply impressed with the overpowering necessity of great changes before the Navy can be effectively organised, that he feels himself compelled by the force of his convictions, as well as by the immense importance of the subject, to lay the grounds on which they are based before the country in a clear and intelligible form, more especially because many circumstances combine to render the present juncture most favourable for repairing the evils he has pointed out, and a long

time may be expected to elapse before such an opportunity will again present itself.

He has carefully confined his observations to matters properly open to the freest public discussion, and his object is not to cast blame on individuals, but rather to show that the mismanagement which exists, grows naturally from the long operation of a thoroughly vicious system.

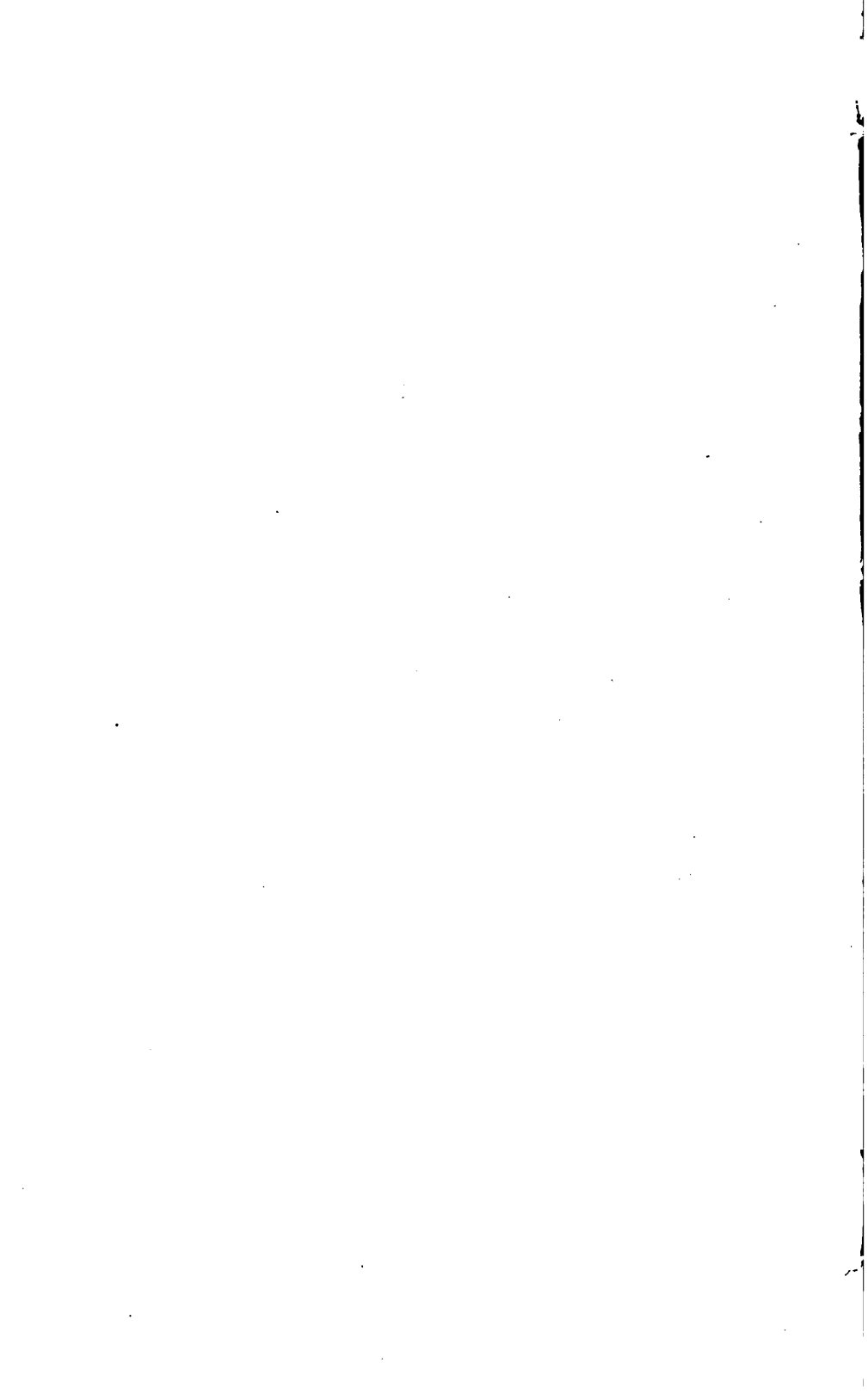
His most sanguine hopes will be fully answered if these pages should have some effect in drawing attention to the Faults and Defaults of our Admiralty administration, and so contribute to their remedy.

January 16th, 1861.



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ADMIRALTY ADMINISTRATION:

ITS FAULTS AND DEFAULTS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

No part of the policy pursued by Louis Napoleon since he became the Ruler of France has been more remarkable than the energy with which he has devoted himself to the increase of his naval power.

Among the important measures following shortly after his election to the Presidency of the Republic, was the appointment of a Commission of the National Assembly, whose reports are now before us under the title of *Enquête Parlementaire sur l'Organisation et la Situation de la Marine Française*, which prepared the programme of the great works he has at boundless cost now nearly completed; since he re-established the Empire, he has himself invented a new and most formidable class of ships cased

with iron, and at the present moment he is vigorously urging on the construction of a new fleet on this principle.

The Commission of the Assembly continued its labours from the latter end of 1849, until the *coup d'état* of December 1851 put an end to its existence by the dissolution of the Chamber of which it was part, but the immense importance attached to the subject by the Prince President may be understood from the fact, that amidst the overwhelming interests and anxieties of that crisis, all the arrangements were completed for the collation and publication of the matter prepared by the Commission within thirteen days of the *coup d'état*.

The Reports of the Commission consisting of two quarto volumes of 1400 pages published in 1852, bear testimony to the industry and ability of the Commission, and prove how earnestly the aspirations of the Emperor for naval power, were shared by the last representative body that has existed in France.

The question the Commissioners place before themselves as the one object and end of their labours, is how to prepare the navy of France to encounter with advantage that of England, for this they say is "the only question," and "there is no other," and the most sanguine expectations are entertained of obtaining a decided practical superiority, by organising with the utmost care all those various elements, the union of which in due proportion to each other, can alone constitute an efficient navy.

The following are among the numberless subjects which

occupied their attention:—First. To train the whole maritime population to the duties of ships of war by actual service in the fleet, thus making the navy in peace a grand training school for war.

Second. To provide a fleet of screw ships sufficient to be able to call into action all the resources in trained men thus obtained.

Third. To organise means of putting an effectively trained crew on board every ship the moment war breaks out.

Fourth. To prepare the means necessary to ensure the constant supply of the fleet under all the exigencies of a great war with coals, stores, and provisions, wherever it should be employed—whether in the Channel, in the Mediterranean, or in the Atlantic.

Fifth. To excavate vast basins and docks at Cherbourg, Toulon, and Brest, as the only possible means by which the fleet can be thus kept supplied and repaired, and so maintained in activity under all the accidents war would occasion.

On the other hand the immense resources of England in all the raw materials of naval power are admitted; but the Commissioners observe that in England “*nothing is organised*,” and they add also, “*at sea nothing can be extemporised* ;” as one striking example that latent elements of strength, however great, will not cope with inferior resources organised for instant action and capable of the fullest development at a moment’s notice, and as illustrating the statement that ‘nothing is organised, they

point to the vast amount of our seafaring population, in connection with the fact that although impressment has long since been declared impossible, yet no substitute has been devised.

The Commissioners further urge that the naval power of England must be divided amongst a great number of remote objects, all alike dependent on naval defence, as well as the shores of the United Kingdom.

That France has by comparison scarcely any remote interests to defend, and may therefore concentrate her force on any object she may select for attack.

That by the power of putting forth her whole strength at once, to be obtained by the perfect organisation of her navy, France may assure to herself an actual superiority in the Channel at the outbreak of war.

That by her elaborate system for training her seafaring population, the whole of which under the Inscription Maritime is at the command of the Government, the ships added to the fleet on her side, will be both more numerous and more efficient than those England will be able to fit out.

That the powers of steam will enable France to strike such a succession of blows at the sources of our wealth and credit, as well as at our naval power, that the neglected organisation of our resources will be impossible of repair, and so the unready giant may be struck down before his ponderous arms can be raised in self-defence.

These and countless other subjects of the deepest possible interest to us, are discussed by the Commission

with very remarkable ability, and indeed nothing having an important bearing on the efficient organisation of the navy escapes the most careful consideration. Probably a work of more momentous importance to the dearest interests of this country was never laid open to the study of her statesmen; nothing certainly could have been more utterly disregarded.

When the Commission was broken up by the *coup d'état*, all subjects of inquiry had been concluded, and the President, M. Dufaure was employed in drawing up the usual report, which was probably never completed, or at least has not appeared. The discussions of the Commissioners, were however taken by short-hand, and occupy one of the quarto volumes before us, showing the views and opinions of every member on each question which arose, so there is little to regret in the absence of the formal report, which with us at least, is often a kind of general compromise expressing the opinion of no one.

These volumes were published in 1852, when we were still reposing on the prestige of the great war so gloriously ended near forty years before, and until rudely awakened by events, the brunt of which, happily for us was borne in remote regions, the perfection of our army and navy was almost an article of national faith. And well justified was the public confidence in all that met the eye, for regiments more perfect, men more gifted with the highest attributes of soldiers never laid down their lives for their country; nor can the whole history of war produce a nobler example of valour in the field, or of unflinching endurance

under untold sufferings, than was presented by the conduct of the army at Sebastopol.

Happily for us these calamities did not occur when nearer interests were at stake. But our regiments were almost broken up, our best and bravest soldiers sacrificed, and the fame of England perilously lowered by the collapse of our military administration. The warning, however, will not have been in vain if sterner trials near home should arise, and find us prepared not only with brave hearts and strong arms, but with an effective organisation of our military resources, under an amended system of administration.

The efficiency of the Admiralty system was put to no severe trial during the Russian war, though enough appeared to raise serious doubts whether it would have better stood the test, had we been engaged in a great naval war; but as the failure of our naval administration at such a crisis would involve the imminent peril of all which Englishmen hold dear, the question of its efficiency or the reverse, is of an importance it would be impossible to over-estimate, and time will be well employed in giving the most serious consideration to this inquiry.

In looking to possible contingencies, the public mind has been far too much confined to the subject of invasion, and when it is supposed we are secure against this particular danger we are apt to relapse into our normal state of self-confidence. But the first essential condition to any attempt at serious invasion is, that France should obtain the command of the seas, without which such an enter-

prise would be madness; and if France should ever hold command of the seas, our commerce could not be carried on, our imports of corn and cotton might be cut off, our markets closed, and with these calamities would come the collapse of credit, paralysing every effort to retrieve our position. Although England in such a condition would be little able to put forth her strength for any purpose, nevertheless invasion would give her another chance, and would resemble the act of the captain, who having silenced and dismasted his enemy, should run his ship alongside the defenceless hulk, and give him a new hope of victory in the result of a hand-to-hand combat.

For these reasons, while we exult in the extraordinary display of public spirit and patriotism shown by the rifle movement, which has acted so powerfully as a sedative on the loud malevolence of Anglophobia, we should remember that it is not on her own soil alone that England can be assailed, for as the French Commission repeatedly observes, "England is vulnerable in every quarter of the globe," and this being the case, it is evident if she should lose the command of the seas, her wealth and power might be sapped in their foundations, without the possibility of firing a rifle in their defence.

It is taking a miserably narrow and imperfect view of the real situation of England, to assume that she may rest satisfied of her security, provided her own shores are made safe against invasion, for all her power and prosperity depend upon her wealth and commerce being maintained, and a passing reference to a small part only

of the interests on which her wealth and commerce are contingent, will give some idea of the naval forces that must be forthcoming for their defence in time of war.

The preservation of the Indian Empire, for example, involves the necessity of keeping open our communications through Egypt, and of retaining our possessions at Malta and Gibraltar; these objects can only be effected by a powerful fleet in the Mediterranean; and if the necessity of protecting the enormous sea-borne commerce which throngs the great highway of nations be also considered, we shall be able to form some idea of how many objects there are essential to our prosperity to be provided for, besides the defence of the shores of these islands from the one danger of invasion.

Nor must we leave out of account, that the great staple manufacture on which millions of our people may be truly said to exist, entirely depends on the constant importation of the raw material brought from the other side of the Atlantic, and to stop this supply would shake the whole fabric of our commercial system to its foundation, and leave millions destitute.

Here we may once more turn for instruction to the pages of the *Enquête Parlementaire*, in which nothing has been overlooked, and we shall find the question is discussed, whether it would be for the interest of France to exempt merchandise from seizure; the answer is prompt and decided, — the commerce of England will be her great burden of defence, and to exempt merchant ships from seizure would relieve her from a duty which

will occupy half her fleet, and would consequently give a freedom of action to her navy, highly disadvantageous to France.

Much has been said also of mitigating the sufferings of war by exempting articles of commerce from seizure when under neutral flags; but are we so simple as to suppose that had she the power to do so, any scruples would induce France to forego the means of speedily reducing us to extremities? — the stipulations of the Treaty of Paris, would be small security against the renewal of the Berlin decrees, if England were ever insane enough to allow France to become more powerful at sea than herself.

The fact that our military administration when tested entirely broke down, and that the merits of our system of naval administration have not been sufficiently tested by any recent events, gives great interest to the present enquiry; and the subject derives additional importance from the persistent energy with which France has continued to cultivate and increase her naval power during the eight years which have slipped by since the reports of the *Enquête Parlementaire* unfolded to us, not only the policy it inaugurated, but the ends and objects that policy was intended to attain. Even without such a distinct and authentic avowal of those objects, it would seem impossible to doubt that a vast increase of the French navy was a matter of some importance to this country; but as this is absolutely denied by politicians*, who at the

* These gentlemen would render a great service to their country, as well as to the cause of economy, if they would induce the Emperor to

present moment seem to be especially in the confidence of the Emperor of the French, it may be useful before the subject is farther discussed, to offer a few observations in answer to those who assert that all apprehensions from France are ridiculous; who ask, what possible advantage could the Emperor of the French gain by a war with England; who declare, that if he broke with England his ruin would immediately follow; and that the whole end and aim of his policy is to cement the English alliance.

We conceive that no better ground for these opinions could be found, than the belief that the power of England — more especially her naval power — would render it fruitless to attack her, and dangerous to arouse her enmity; and those who entertain them would be therefore logically bound to unite with the rest of their countrymen in demanding the full and efficient maintenance of the navy. Or even granting these propositions to the extent of supposing them true if we had at the present moment no screw fleet, no iron-plated ships, no rifle guns, while France abounded in all these instruments of superiority, still they would afford no sufficient grounds for neglecting similar securities, nor could they afford the smallest argument against the wisdom of maintaining our navy on a scale commensurate with the immensely important in-

abandon the intention, which the newspapers attribute to him, of increasing his iron-cased ships from six to nineteen with the greatest despatch; and it might be suggested to them as a means at once of testing their own influence, and the pacific intentions of the Emperor.

terests dependent on it for protection, and with the means which might be employed to attack them.

Admitting the Emperor's anxiety for our alliance to be perfectly sincere and incapable of change, he has himself told us that circumstances might arise which would compel him to break with us ; and these circumstances become probable precisely in proportion to the degree in which we may allow him to obtain the advantage in naval preparations ; even if we were to grant also that a war thus forced upon him must lead eventually to his ruin, this would not prevent the most serious calamities falling upon us if such an attack should find us wholly unprepared, and even were the ruin of his dynasty to follow that of this country, it would be but a poor satisfaction for the blessings we had so insanelly sacrificed.

There is only one more point to be mentioned, and one more question asked ; the Emperor of the French is after all mortal ; and will those who would have us place ourselves at his mercy, answer with equal confidence for the good intentions of whatever government may succeed him ?

Common sense itself declares that in a navy capable of immediate expansion, and equal to any possible emergency, we hold the best and only real security for peace. We possess all the raw materials of strength in unexampled abundance ; we expend with unstinting liberality all that is demanded for the purpose of maintaining a sufficient and powerful navy ; and the question whether we are thus prepared to meet any possible dangers, is merged in the further

question of the efficiency or inefficiency of our naval administrative system.

The necessity of this policy of self-defence has been, moreover, urged upon us by many acts of the great Ruler himself on whose friendly sentiments so much reliance is placed. Is it possible we have already forgotten the hasty conclusion of the Russian war, — the first step to that alliance with Russia for which, after the example of the first Napoleon, such extreme anxiety has been shown? This alliance, by the way, is one of the objects which the commission so often referred to, regards as of infinite importance to France in any future war with England.

Then followed the sudden inspiration which changed at the moment of its issue *La Médaille de la Grande Armée*, into *La Médaille de Ste-Hélène*, thus converted from a memorial of the victories and glories of France, to associations having connection only with misfortune and defeat. No interpretation is possible, except that which turns on the policy of keeping alive the embers of discord to be fanned into a flame at any moment it might serve a purpose.

The Italian campaign, again, was a distinct breach of every idea of good understanding founded on a genuine pacific policy; and could any illusion still have remained, the treatment of Switzerland, the annexation of Nice and Savoy, should have dispelled it.

Since these events, however, Russia has changed her previous attitude, and has sought a close union with Austria and Prussia, apparently with the intention of

resisting the further developments of French policy ; and Louis Napoleon is again eager, for the time, and for his present purposes, to cultivate the English alliance ; for the present we shall hear no more of such measures as the revival of the trade in Negroes, or of the coercion of Portugal, whose opposition to that barbarous traffic had entirely originated in treaties with this country of half a century's duration, and whose action in suppressing it had been constantly stimulated by each succeeding British Government, in conformity with the earnest desire of the people of England. These acts were indeed singularly well chosen, if the object had been to wound the feelings of the people of England, and to lower the prestige of the country in the eyes of the world, but by no possible interpretation can they be reconciled with the pretended firm and settled policy of conciliation and sympathy.

That "France alone goes to war for an idea" serves to recall to us the policy Louis Napoleon really represents. Deep in the heart of every Frenchman is cherished the belief that France should be preeminent among nations, her boundaries widely extended to what are termed her natural limits, and that it is her mission to fulfil the projects of Louis XIV and of the first Napoleon.

History teaches that in both cases England formed the barrier against the final success of these aspirations. So long as Louis XIV held Charles II as his pensioner, all went well with him, and his policy was everywhere successful ; but on the expulsion of the Stuarts, England threw her weight into the scale of European right, and combining

with the other powers of Europe, frustrated his schemes, and so France resumed her proper place as one of the great powers, but not the one great power.

Under a totally changed internal condition, the reign of Napoleon proved these ideas had lost none of their power, and again after a prolonged and terrible struggle, England was the soul and centre of the general alliance which baffled the ambition of France, and hurled the arbiter of the destinies of Europe from his throne.

Do such aspirations still hold their place in the minds of the French people? and if the teachings of history are such as we read them, do they convey no similar lesson to the present representative of these ideas, who follows out his schemes with a persistent resolution not the less formidable because he employs other means besides physical force?

Observe, for example, while he is straining every nerve to establish a naval superiority, the use he is making of the party in England who oppose our armaments. When he makes his first step in the traditional policy of territorial aggrandisement, hear them exclaim "Perish Savoy!" and declare that national independence is as dust in the balance when weighed against prospects of increased wealth and commerce. Strange inconsistency in men who claim the advanced posts in a nation of freemen! But how useful, should it be attempted to deal with Belgium and the Rhine provinces in the same manner!

Again, in that celebrated conversation between an Englishman and a Frenchman, which was published in

the "Times" of December 24th, 1859, the Emperor explains to Mr. Cobden's perfect satisfaction, that the people of England are utterly deceived in the belief that he has done more in naval preparations than simply to fulfil the programme of Louis-Philippe! — a programme which did not include one screw ship, still less one iron-plated frigate, which regarded the completion of Cherbourg as remotely possible, and which never dreamed of the gigantic works at Brest, and at Toulon, compared with which those even of Cherbourg appear almost insignificant. The least reference to the pages of the *Enquête Parlementaire* would have signally contradicted this bold assertion, though even its recommendations have been greatly surpassed by what is actually in progress.

Again, the Frenchman explains that a great number of flat-bottomed boats, capable of carrying 500 troops each, have not been constructed for purposes of invasion, but owe their existence to the expectation on the part of the Emperor that Lord Derby's Government would put a stop to the export of coal as contraband of war during the Italian campaign; it was to meet this contingency that these boats were built to carry coal by canal from Belgium to — Brest! This seems a singular *non sequitur*, but is it not suggestive?

The French Commercial Treaty has prevented the possibility of this country hereafter placing a check on the supply of coal to France, when she may attack other powers, except at the expense of ourselves becoming belligerents, for of course to stop the export of coal to France now

would be a breach of treaty, and consequently a *casus belli*.

Finally, the Frenchman is made to say, and the Englishman listens with an innocent interest as if it had not been his own story, repeated hundreds and hundreds of times for the last twenty years : “ France is persuaded that all your pretended apprehension is a sham — the Tory party having lost their influence, are endeavouring to get up this cry in order to restore its power on the old associations of national animosity.” How close the alliance with this party when the Emperor allows himself to be made their mouth-piece in reiterating such a very stale and absurd fiction !

In the ancient fable, the wind wasted all his fury in the contest for the traveller’s cloak in vain ; but the sun, throwing out his genial beams, soon obtained the victory : and so it seems to be hoped that the recent blandishments of the Emperor will overcome all the suspicions of the English people, and induce us to cease this foolish determination to vie with France in maintaining a great navy. Should this deep policy succeed, and the country be persuaded to return to the estimates of the standard year 1835, then Mr. Bright may well exclaim, perish India, perish Ireland, perish the independence of England itself rather than for a moment obstruct the sacred development of free-trade, for whatever he may say, the only means of preserving them will have been sacrificed.

Should then the Emperor of the French entertain “ ideas ” so cherished in France, it does not seem so

wholly improbable that he should be pursuing a policy intended to reduce England to such comparative weakness as to be unable to defeat once more the traditional policy of France. And there are facts enough before us which it would not be difficult to explain on this hypothesis; whatever other motives may have prompted the Commercial Treaty, it could not certainly have been more ably followed out if it were mainly intended to cajole us through the popularity with which free-trade is regarded, and through the influence those who are looked upon as its representatives exercise on other subjects. So long however as England remains true to herself, the universal dominion of France is a dream; but if betrayed by the folly of her statesmen, she should sacrifice the power, especially the naval power, necessary to maintain her great place, then are those ambitious aspirations not far from their accomplishment, for a Charlemagne may again reign in Europe, should the power of England be eclipsed.

Whatever may be said on many of the points touched upon, enough has been shown to prove that the navy of France is very powerful, and that it occupies in a most remarkable degree the constant interest of the Emperor.

The striking efficiency it has attained has been by virtue of a system of administration ably conducted on the principle of direct personal responsibility to the minister and with the minister, for every branch of the service.

The Minister of Marine has absolute authority under the Emperor.

He is assisted by a "Conseil d'Amirauté" which he consults, whose opinions are recorded, but the minister acts on his own responsibility, and when he thinks fit, disregards its advice.

Each of those elements, which in the aggregate constitute a navy, is placed under a responsible head, who manages all the details of his department, and is answerable for its efficiency.

The counsels of the Commission of Enquiry have been vigorously followed out, and France has now to boast of a splendid fleet in commission, carefully trained to a complete system of manœuvres necessary to the development of the new powers afforded by steam; which has also fulfilled its most important functions during peace as a great training school for the officers of the navy, and for the maritime population at large.

A very large proportion of the ships not in active service can be ready at a few days' notice, and can at once be manned with crews trained to every duty from the *Inscription Maritime*.

At Toulon, at Brest, and at Cherbourg, vast basins and numerous docks have been prepared, or are in progress, affording ample facilities for coaling, supplying and repairing fleets, to an extent proportioned to the exigencies which modern warfare would create.

If France does possess any advantage over us, however, it can only be in the superiority of her administrative powers, shown in the organisation of her very inferior resources, for England possesses every element of naval

strength in far greater abundance and in much higher perfection, while every demand for the means of cultivating them has been granted by the Legislature with a lavish hand.

Never was a country so powerful in the spirit and loyalty of its people, in its boundless material resources, in the unequalled skill and energy of its engineers and shipbuilders.

Never were our officers and seamen worthier of their ancient fame—Peel in the Crimea, or with his 32-pounder advancing with the first line of skirmishers in Central India, — the heroic Hope, wounded again and again at the Peiho Forts, found by their sides the same hearts of oak that won the great battles of former days.

The country through its dearest interests demands the safeguard of a sufficient navy. The officers and men, ready to risk their lives in her defence, claim in the name of justice that adequate numbers of comrades trained to arms shall be forthcoming in the hour of need, and that all those various material resources and facilities necessary to enable them to take and keep the sea, and to defeat the enemy, shall be prepared beforehand with due foresight, and to an adequate extent.

All true-hearted Englishmen are agreed that the navy shall be maintained in full efficiency, and Parliament has only responded to the national will, by the unhesitating liberality with which it has satisfied every demand ; nor is there reason to doubt that the sums so generously voted would have been amply sufficient to fulfil the

desire of the public and provide all the means necessary to meet any possible emergency; but if it could be shown that the sums, enormous as they are, have yet fallen short of what was necessary, the blame must rest with the governing powers, for Parliament has proved its readiness to grant all that might be asked.

To the question — “Are we or are we not provided with any system which approaches in its results the admirable organisation of the navy of France?” it is no answer to point to the millions upon millions voted by the House of Commons without stint, more especially as a bad system is certain to be an expensive one, and no mere expenditure of money, however great, can afford the least security that the affairs of the navy are conducted with that foresight, ability, and persistent energy which have marked the measures of France, and by which alone great things can be accomplished. It is absurd not to face the question, “Are we, or are we not in a condition to maintain our naval supremacy?” “Have the great elements which constitute naval power been ably and wisely dealt with, and are they so organised as to justify the confidence we place in the navy, as the inviolable safeguard of the dearest interests of the country?”

It is proposed to inquire if the country is really thus provided, and, should there be any shortcomings, to investigate the causes to which they are to be attributed.

CHAP. II.

THE ADMIRALTY.

THE great office of Lord High Admiral has been executed by commission for nearly a century and a half, except for the short period, during which the Duke of Clarence administered the affairs of the navy in person, as Lord High Admiral.

A distinction was formerly made between the executive and civil branches of the service, the former was directly managed by the Admiralty, while the administration of the dockyards and of the civil services, were in the hands of the Navy Board, which was of course subordinate to the Admiralty.

In 1833, however, the Navy Board was abolished, and the department of the Surveyor of the Navy, the Accountant-General, the Storekeeper-General, and the Comptroller of Victualling, were brought under the direct superintendence of the Admiralty; at the same time the Transport Board also was abolished.

The Admiralty since this change has consisted of six Commissioners and two Secretaries.

The post of First Lord of the Admiralty has been filled by statesmen whose party position entitled them to a

seat in the Cabinet, but with one exception, the First Lord has never had any professional connection with the navy.

Four of the Commissioners are naval officers of distinction, the senior of whom, often spoken of as the "Senior Sea Lord," is considered as the special adviser of the minister on all professional matters.

The sixth and Junior Lord is often a young gentleman trying his "'prentice hand" on naval affairs, as his first introduction into public life.

Of the two Secretaries, one is a permanent appointment; the first Secretary (as well as the First and Junior Lord) is in Parliament, and when the First Lord as at present, is in the Upper House, he becomes often the sole organ of the Admiralty in the House of Commons.

Any two Lords and a Secretary are sufficient to constitute a Board.

The whole Board, and the First Secretary, change with every change of Government; but one, usually a junior naval member of the Board, has often been continued in the new Admiralty to give some leaven of experience to the new occupants of office.

The First Lord, as a member of the Cabinet, and possessed of the secret intentions of the Government, may often require certain armaments, or distribution of force to be made, for reasons not communicated to the Board; but in all matters concerning the internal government of the navy, he has, at least theoretically, no powers whatever apart from the Board. It is nevertheless stated on

very high authority, that in practice the First Lord may always effect any change he pleases irrespective of the opinions of his colleagues.

If such independent action is possible, every argument of common sense, as of fair dealing, would condemn the solemn farce of covering it with the collective responsibility, which has always sheltered every measure; and would urge that the minister should stand before the country responsible for every act to which the majority of the Board does not assent.

We will suppose that the multifarious affairs of the navy have just fallen into the hands of a Board of Admiralty, composed of a First Lord who may have held other offices but is ignorant of maritime affairs; of naval officers entertaining very different opinions on all professional matters, and with perhaps one exception, without official experience; and of the Junior Lord.

The new occupants of office of necessity fall into the former grooves, adopt the programme of their predecessors, and thus each member of the Board finds himself invested with the superintendence of some dozen branches of naval administration according to a printed form, entitled "Distribution of Business," under which various duties are parcelled out to each Lord, according to his seniority at the Board. This arrangement of the "Distribution of Business" is spoken of occasionally as if it had something of a secret official character, but the absurdity of this idea is very great, seeing that it is hung up in almost every room, in a printed form as in

the other public offices, and can obviously only be useful for the information of the public, for every person who goes to the Admiralty on business must of course ascertain in whose department his business lies, and every messenger and porter in the establishment is ready to supply him with the necessary information. The mode in which the business is thus distributed is also to be found over and over again in the blue books, in the Evidence of Lords of the Admiralty before Parliamentary and other Commissions; this air of mystery is worth noticing, however, for it strongly exemplifies the absolute nullity of all sense of individual responsibility of each member of the Board, in connection with those branches of business which are committed to his charge by his colleagues.

The First Lord must often read with positive dismay the list of some twelve or fifteen matters, entirely apart from all his previous habits and experience, which are entrusted by this arrangement to his own personal management and supervision.

The next Commissioner (the Senior Sea Lord), finds matters so multifarious, so important, so very difficult, all thrown upon his hands under such circumstances as to constitute in the aggregate a charge which no man that ever lived could fulfil. While his time is fully taken up by the constant superintendence of all the other business of the navy, he has the Manning of the Fleet to provide for, and the magnitude of the task from the absence of any organised system or settled plan providing for this vital matter, will soon be referred to.

To the other Naval Lords are committed a great variety of matters of more or less importance, amongst which are the superintendence of the Storekeeper-General, and of the Comptroller of Victualling, while the Junior Lord is charged with the supervision of the Accountant-General's department, and also with the exceedingly important superintendence of the Director of Works, which includes that of the docks, basins, and other works at our arsenals.

It is most important to remember, that this distribution of business is an internal arrangement by which the Board delegates to its several members a portion of its own duties ; that each member is responsible to the Board, and to the Board alone, for his performance of those duties ; and that for each and all these duties the responsibility before Parliament and the country is that, not of the individual Lord, but of the Board in its collective capacity.

The several members of the Board are not therefore in the least degree identified in the eyes of the public with the branches entrusted to them, so this want of individual connection with the subjects they individually administer, and this collective responsibility of the Board for everything, produces practically a complete want of that essential corrective and safeguard, a direct personal responsibility for each branch of the public service.

This system operates more or less injuriously upon every branch of naval administration ; but its evils are unfortunately most fully experienced with respect to the most

important of all. As regards the departments presided over and actually managed in all their details by permanent heads, the supervision of Lords of the Admiralty, at the best appears nugatory, for members of the Board cannot be expected from their previous training to possess that knowledge with respect to them, essential to any efficient superintendence, and it must always be objectionable to overshadow the real practical responsibility of the competent head of a department, with the merely nominal supervision of superior authority. What advantage, for example, has the country derived from the labours of some thirty or forty young gentlemen who have succeeded each other in the nominal superintendence of the department managed by that able public officer, the Accountant-General? If supervision is necessary, it should be one involving a real practical responsibility, and this can only exist concurrently with competent knowledge and experience. If, for example, the First Lord of the Admiralty, being a civilian, should be forced to take command of the Channel fleet in person, the responsibility for the probable consequences would rest rather with those who placed him in command, than with the individual, who from the necessity of the case, would be ignorant of every duty, and from his misfortune and not by his fault had been placed in so false a position.

Looking to another most important subject, we find the Junior Lord, a civilian, is charged with the superintendence of the Department of the Director of Works, a soldier; this department includes the whole system of basin,

docks, and harbour accommodation for the fleet, matters intimately connected with the rise and fall of tides, the draught of water of ships under different circumstances, especially requiring the knowledge and experience of a seaman, to deal with satisfactorily; the same observations also apply with respect to the harbours of refuge, which is in the First Lord's department; it would therefore not be surprising if these most important branches of naval preparation should prove to be in but a poor condition.

This mode of superintending the Departments of the Accountant, and Storekeeper-General, and the Comptroller of Victualling is highly objectionable in principle, yet the permanent heads are left to manage most of the details of their departments, and they are on the whole in a highly efficient state. But in the Direction of Works there is no certain definite duty to perform; and the changes we have witnessed in the ships which compose the fleet occasion a corresponding necessity for adapting our establishments to their repair and supply, on which practical and professional judgment is indispensable.

With respect to the department of the Surveyor of the Navy, the Senior Sea Lord superintends the Dockyards, so far as relates to the Surveyor's Department, and this has for a long course of years been acted upon so as to bring the whole details of the work of the dockyards under the orders of the Admiralty, and to deprive the Surveyor of due authority over the department for which he is nominally responsible. For many years previously, as well as

during the whole Russian war, and down to the year 1859, the Surveyor had no power to give a single order to any person employed in the dockyards on any subject whatever. Things necessary to be done went to the Admiralty in the form of a "submission" from him, and if approved, could only be executed by an order from the Admiralty. The Surveyor has been reproached for not personally superintending to a greater extent the work in the dockyards, but what a mockery would be such an attempt on the part of a public officer, who was so utterly deprived of authority, that had he witnessed the wholesale destruction of the public property he could have taken no step to arrest it except by a "submission" to the Admiralty. Thus the authority of the only person who by himself or his assistants might have exercised a real practical general superintendence, was almost extinguished, and any one who considers the position, and the necessity of effective control over establishments of this description, may well be astonished that under such a system the dockyards should have been maintained in a state of efficiency.

The interference of the Admiralty with the details of dockyard work which had so long prevailed, was modified by the present Admiralty in 1859, and the Surveyor has since been allowed to give orders direct to the dockyards on various matters of importance; but in many respects the position still requires further great change before he can occupy his proper ground, as the responsible head of a department; the recent change does great

credit to the present Admiralty, but it might be any day reversed if there was a change of government.

Objectionable as this system has been with respect to the Surveyor's department, there has still been some security for the public interest, inasmuch as there was a permanent officer connected with it, whose influence would be necessarily great with every Board of Admiralty, and would operate consistently and in the same direction.

But the climax of the evils of the system is reached when similar management is applied to a subject of the highest moment having no responsible person permanently connected with it, and respecting which no plan can be traced to guide the steps of the fleeting occupants of office ; this most remarkable combination of adverse conditions unhappily is to be found in the manning of the navy, the most difficult and the most important duty, to fulfil which the Admiralty may be said to exist, for unless the Fleet can be manned, all the material elements of naval power prepared at such boundless cost, are worse than worthless.

The Manning of the Fleet, as has already been shown, in common with a vast number of other matters, is thrown upon the shoulders of the Senior Sea Lord by the distribution of business ; and this great and vital matter is thus delegated by the Board to one of its members, who is already so overwhelmed with other business that it is absolutely impossible he can give it more than occasional and very cursory attention.

Under the French system, there is the Inscription Maritime, organised to the highest degree, fully understood

being in constant operation at all times, and thoroughly established by law. There are several hundreds of officers of various grades employed in superintending its operation, and conducting its details; the force it will produce is known almost to a man, and the Minister can always obtain the fullest information of the amount of force at his command, while the subject makes no demand on his time or his attention. With us, on the contrary, there is no system organised, no principle recognised, nor is there any responsible person permanently connected with the subject to whom the incoming Admiralty or the Senior Sea Lord can look, as sharing its responsibility, far less entrust with the execution of its projects. The Senior Sea Lord finds that the manning the fleet was in his predecessor's hands, and he will vainly seek for any consistent course of action among a mass of contradictory circulars, embracing and confusing every possible question that can arise between seamen collectively, and the governing powers. He will find a number of petty expedients and small palliatives on no comprehensive plan, which if all the men on paper were forthcoming, would supply about a sixth part of the number war would instantly demand; and no organised plan exists which gives him the services of one man more. In short, he has not a system to superintend, but he has to grope his way in the dark to devise and establish one, his time being taken up with the superintendence of the current affairs of the navy demanding perpetual attention, his term of office probably extending over only a few months, with the consciousness that whatever he might

commence, his successors would almost certainly not continue.

Amongst the heap of documents, showing the futility of attempting to effect so great a work by small spasmodic efforts, he will see that the Admiralty has repeatedly acknowledged its incapacity to deal with the question under the existing system, by turning it over to Commissions out of doors, which have generally made their Reports to the successors of the Board who appointed them, and whose recommendations have never been more than very partially carried out.

It will be said that the responsibility for such a state of things rests upon the Admiralty. But which Admiralty? The reply must be, all the Admiralties that have existed since the inability to man the fleet was proved twenty or thirty years ago, a fact which has been subsequently declared repeatedly in Parliament by members of the Board; in vain shall we seek for any individual permanent responsibility, and had such existed in any apparent tangible shape, it must have led to the remedy, for no man dare to have allowed himself to be so involved in it without insisting on effectual means of manning the navy in time of danger being devised.

The Senior Sea Lord in his individual capacity has no responsibility; nor has he to administer a system: he has a system to invent, to create; and with all his other duties pressing constantly upon him, it is nothing less than impossible that the manning of the fleet should be so provided for, nor will it be to the end of time,

unless a more efficient mode of dealing with it can be discovered.

In the first place a large measure must be devised by Government for providing all that War would require, by enabling the Admiralty rapidly to expand our force in seamen for that great event, in contemplation of the possibility of which we may be said alone to maintain a navy.

In place of a host of petty expedients there must be one comprehensive plan, and the Fleet in Peace should be considered mainly as the nucleus for the Navy in War.

In the second place the system when decided on, must be made a department of naval administration, placed under a permanent head responsible to the governing power of the navy, and with him to the country.

It is obvious to the least reflection, that if the departments of Accountant-General, Storekeeper-General, Comptroller of Victualling, and Surveyor, were deprived of their permanent heads, and their duties thrown into the mass of work to be managed by the Board, to be taken up and laid down again every year or two, and to pass into new hands at every change of Government, those branches of naval administration would soon fall into inextricable confusion; and is it reasonable to suppose that the far more important, as it is also the infinitely more difficult question of manning the fleet, can be dealt with successfully on such principles?

Whether or no a civilian may be able to fulfil satisfactorily the functions of First Lord of the Admiralty, it is very obvious that, to whomsoever they may be

entrusted, there is one preliminary condition essential to success, namely, that each important branch of the navy shall be represented by a permanent responsible person, possessing a perfect knowledge of the state of his department, and a mastery of the details he regulates and superintends, on whom the minister may rely for the fullest information as to the condition of each branch of the public service, especially as to the actual force at his command.

Such means of information are wholly wanting in the most important of all, namely—the Manning of the Fleet, and the only knowledge yet attained has been that of our utterly unorganised and critical position ; the only remedy proposed, to turn the subject over to a Commission out of doors, strictly charged however on no account to extend its inquiries to what is in fact the whole question, namely, the course pursued and manner in which the subject has been dealt with by the Admiralty itself.

It is unnecessary to insist at any length on the evil of divided councils, which must often occur amongst six persons brought together by the chapter of accidents, without previous knowledge of each other's views, and in fact the Admiralty often represents nothing so completely as the endless diversity of opinion which prevails among naval officers ; a diversity which on the other hand, is partly accounted for by the absence of any standard course of policy to be discovered in the conduct of successive naval administrations.

The government of the navy by a Board consisting of six members, without harmony of opinion, and on whose shoulders is thrown a confused mass of business, executive, administrative, and financial, which comprehends duties of such magnitude as that of creating a system for manning of the fleet, and on the other hand, descends to details of the pettiest description, while no individual responsibility attaches to any one object it has to fulfil, would afford small prospect of successful results, even apart from the constant change of persons who so rapidly succeed each other in these Sisyphean labours.

In order however fully to comprehend the merits of the system, this latter element of failure cannot be passed over.

In a period of not much more than thirty years, up to 1859, there were seventeen changes in the First Lord of the Admiralty, giving an average tenure of office to each of about one year, ten months, two weeks; and during the same period the total number of changes in those who have managed the affairs of the navy as Members of the Board, and Secretaries of the Admiralty, amounted to 103.

The changes have occurred recently in a yet more rapid succession, for within the last eight years there have been four general changes of the Board with that of the Government, and there have been five First Lords, with thirty-four changes in all of members of the Board and Secretaries.

Suppose it should happen, by the chronic neglect of

some important element of naval strength, that a serious calamity occurred, who of the 103 gentlemen who have shared in the management of naval affairs would be held responsible? Or it may be asked, which of the many Boards of Admiralty which have so quickly succeeded each other in office? The country, aroused to the astounding fact that the right arm of her defence in which she had so implicitly trusted, was notwithstanding a boundless expenditure, in a very critical condition, would put a sudden end to that practical irresponsibility which prevails under ordinary circumstances. There can be no doubt that the brunt of public indignation would fall on the actual occupants of office, but with singular injustice; for, with respect to any deep seated and long existing deficiency, they would be less to blame than their predecessors, who have not only held, but have quitted, office with full experience of the want of organisation of our resources and of the evils of our system, and yet neither in office nor out of office, have endeavoured to provide a remedy; and if each successive Admiralty finds increasing difficulties, and naval affairs appear to be more and more inefficiently conducted, it is not necessarily that those whose misfortune it is to be called to their administration are more in fault than those who have gone before them; but it is rather owing to the accumulated, and still accumulating defects and short-comings inseparable from *the system* which has defeated the earnest efforts of so many able and honest men.

That any Admiralty, consisting of statesmen unacquainted with maritime affairs, or the habits and feelings of seamen, and of naval officers probably all holding different opinions, should be able in the course of a few months' tenure of office, not only to arrive at sound conclusions, but should succeed in establishing a system on a firm and lasting basis for manning the navy, is absolutely impossible; even should such a scheme be devised by perfect wisdom, there could be no hope of those who originated it remaining long enough in office to carry it out themselves, and we know too well by sad experience how completely the management of the navy resembles a rope of sand, and how little each succeeding Board is disposed to take up and continue the measures of their predecessors.

The whole plan of naval administration manifests such an amount of absurdity that if a perverse ingenuity were employed to suggest the most inefficient possible system for managing a navy, it might fairly be defied to produce anything worse.

Many objections however that have been stated may be considered of a theoretical nature, and as systems perfect in theory are very apt nevertheless to break down in practice, so on the other hand things which theoretically considered cannot be for a moment defended, are yet sometimes attended by a certain degree of practical success.

Thus any statement of theoretical defects in our system

of naval administration will be justly considered as inconclusive; and hence it becomes necessary to ascertain its value by practical results, as shown by a more particular inquiry into the actual condition of the most important branches of the navy, and so to apply to the solution of the question the inexorable logic of facts.

CHAP. III.

DOCKYARDS AND SHIPS OF WAR.

As the principal elements of which a navy consists are ships and seamen, so they must be the most important objects of all naval administration, and the actual state and condition of these elements which compose a navy must therefore afford the most conclusive test of the merits of the existing system.

The French axiom, "Nothing is extemporised at sea," is unquestionably true; and so the ships, with the other appliances which would be required in war, must be built and prepared during peace, in readiness to protect and maintain our interests.

The complaint that ships are worn out without ever having been at sea, is in other words to lament that we have had forty years of peace, the long continuance of which may be fairly attributed in a great degree to the possession of effective means of defence, always its best security. It would be much more reasonable to complain that one's house had never been burnt down, or that one was still alive after having paid fire or life assurance for many years, for in these cases the catastrophe of fire or of death cannot be prevented by the precaution.

The position of England at sea is defensive to a far

greater degree than that of any other country, for she stands alone in the magnitude of the objects she must be ready to defend in all quarters of the globe, and as the French Commission observes, England is vulnerable everywhere.

She has no desire to extend her possessions, but she is determined to protect them, and though anxious to remain at peace if possible, she is resolved to maintain ample means of providing for their security. That such is the will of the nation has been proved by many sacrifices, and supposing it to be fulfilled, and that we possessed all that is necessary for the purpose of self-preservation, no further efforts would be required, for under such circumstances it never could be our policy in times of profound peace, to invent new engines or to strike out new principles of war, the only effect of which would be to add largely to our expenditure.

But on the other hand, if other naval powers devote themselves to the increase of their navies, and strain every nerve to obtain advantages at sea by new instruments of war, ably conceived and energetically brought into existence, England is compelled by the essential conditions of her position, to supply herself as rapidly as her neighbours with these new warlike engines.

Having regard to the great interests staked on her naval pre-eminence, she cannot allow any other power to obtain a superiority at sea without risking the existence of at least a part of those interests, the combination of which constitutes her greatness.

The Emperor of the French expressed his surprise and disappointment at our feeble operations in the Baltic, to which he attributed the prolongation of the war to a second year, and had we been duly prepared with the class of small vessels (which in case of war near home, would have been necessary to the defence of our own shores), probably the campaign of 1854 would have produced peace, notwithstanding our disasters in the Crimea.

Sir Charles Napier, however, in 1854, had not one gun-boat with his fleet, nor had he one mortar vessel.

Sir Richard Dundas, in the second year of this war, had but sixteen or eighteen gun-boats, and a dozen mortar vessels.

It was not till 1855 that a sufficient number of these vessels was commenced; and after the war was over upwards of 150 were triumphantly paraded in 1856, in proof of our boundless resources. Our resources are boundless, but if they are only called into existence when it is *too late*, the exposure of the want of vigour and foresight in bringing them into action is far more damaging, than any display of latent power can be the reverse, and only encourages hostile speculations founded on the belief, that "in England nothing is organised," and on the fact, that "at sea nothing can be extemporised."

If Sir Charles Napier had possessed in 1854 the few gunboats with which Sir Richard Dundas was provided in the following year, or if in 1855 Sir Richard Dundas had commanded the 150 vessels uselessly paraded after

peace was concluded, how different would have been the history of the Russian war, especially how different the position England would have occupied in the eyes of the world at its termination! The Russian measures of defence went on *pari passu* with ours for attack, and what only sufficed to destroy the dockyard of Sveaburg in 1855, in 1854 would probably have produced far greater results. That gun-boats were indispensable to successful operations in the Baltic was perfectly well known, and was urged on the Admiralty in the autumn of 1853 by Sir C. Napier, as well as by many other officers, and since active operations could not be commenced till May, there was sufficient time to have prepared a considerable force by the time the Baltic was open.

These vessels were built for a special purpose, and if it had been certain they would all rot in three years, it would have been wise to build them, had they only been built in time to produce some result worthy of what was expected from the first naval power; but the means came slowly halting after the occasion, and we have nothing to look back upon but regret upon regrets.

Then follows the history of hauling them up at a great cost within a hundred yards of the sea, but with a perverse ingenuity, in a place whence it required months to launch them again; they remained in this condition for two years, until at the cost of thousands more the means of getting them afloat was at length provided. Their defective condition appears to have resulted from the necessity of the case, caused by the impossibility of getting sea-

soned timber, and by their hasty construction exposed to the weather which was also unavoidable ; but this result would occasion comparatively little cause for regret, had they but been in time for the war which called them into existence.

From the moment the Reports of the French Commissioners were presented, the Government proceeded with the utmost energy to fulfil and in some cases to exceed their recommendations. All this was going on almost unknown to us, until the inauguration of Cherbourg in 1858 appeared to take every one by surprise, though the fullest information was before us in the *Enquête Parlementaire*, recommending in the strongest language the urgent necessity of completing it immediately, as absolutely indispensable to place France in a proper position in case of a war with England. Cherbourg was spoken of as "the eye to watch, and the arm to strike England," in the words of the First Napoleon ; and it was proposed by the Commission to complete it in six years, instead of sixty which at the rate of outlay and progress prior to 1852, it would have occupied. Accordingly, it *was* completed in 1858, and inaugurated in the presence of a large number of our legislators and statesmen, who appeared to be quite taken aback at the spectacle. It is to be remembered, not only that we had before us the published Reports of the Commission urging the immediate and energetic conclusion of these mighty works, but that this tenfold increase of the efforts, and the outlay employed in their execution had been going on for six years, only sixty miles

from our own shores, without seeming to attract any attention in England.

These great preparations, thus forced upon the public notice, created much anxiety in the country as to our own naval preparations, for the unobserved growth of this great arsenal so close to our own shores had necessarily a very startling effect, and towards the end of the year the Treasury appointed a committee to inquire into the condition of the navy on several subjects, which were in fact the special and most important duties of naval administration.

The Committee was appointed by Lord Derby in the following minute * :—

“ MINUTE, 1st December, 1858.

“ THE attention of the Cabinet has been drawn to the very serious increase which has taken place of late years in the Navy Estimates, while, at the same time, it is represented that the naval force of the country is far inferior to what it ought to be with reference to that of other powers, and especially of France; and that increased efforts and increased expenditure are imperatively called for to place it on a proper footing. Whatever may be essential to the maintenance of the naval supremacy of the country must be secured as a matter of paramount necessity; and the amount of force requisite for that purpose must be decided on the responsibility of the Cabinet, and cannot be delegated to any other authority. But inasmuch as financial con-

* Report of a Committee appointed by the Treasury to inquire into the Navy Estimates, from 1852 to 1858, and into the comparative state of the Navies of England and France. (Ordered to be printed by the House of Commons, April 4, 1859).

siderations cannot be overlooked, the Cabinet have thought it desirable that a strict examination should be made into the comparative expenditure of the years 1852-53 and 1853-54, and of the present year, with a view of placing fully before the Cabinet all the causes which have contributed to the large increase which has taken place, and which appear to threaten a further increase for the future. Some of these causes are plain and obvious; but there is room for inquiry whether, in each case, they have been sufficient to justify the amount of increase which they have respectively involved. This is a question of detail which can only be satisfactorily answered by a close and minute examination of accounts; and the Cabinet are of opinion that such an examination ought to be entrusted to a small committee composed of gentlemen of acknowledged ability, and practically conversant with finance and with naval accounts. They have, therefore, requested Mr. Hamilton, the Secretary of the Treasury; Mr. Corry, Secretary of the Admiralty; Sir Richard Bromley, K.C.B., Accountant-General of the Navy; and Mr. Anderson, Chief Clerk in the Treasury, to undertake the task. These gentlemen, having accepted the duty, will meet at the Chancellor of the Exchequer's house in Downing-street, and will prosecute, with as little delay as possible, the investigation confided to them, and report to the Treasury the results of their inquiries, with any suggestions which they may be desirous of making.

“It is unnecessary to observe that the duty which they have undertaken is of a highly confidential character, that it is not necessary to invest them with any formal character, and that they possess no authority for summoning witnesses, or requiring the production of papers; but the Board of Admiralty will put them freely in possession of such documents as may facilitate their inquiries; and it cannot be doubted that the officers of the various departments will be ready to give them any information in their power. It is very desirable that the Committee should

confer freely with several of these officers, and more especially with Sir Baldwin Walker, the Surveyor of the Navy, whose opinion, with regard to one, especially, of the principal subjects of inquiry, is entitled to every respect.

“The Committee will not fail to examine minutely into the expenditure in the dockyards, and the adequacy, or otherwise, of the labour given in return for the large sums expended; and as one of the main causes assigned for a prospective increase is the comparative state of preparation of France, in respect of powerful screw-steamers, and the expenditure which has taken place, and is still going on, in her dockyards, it would be very desirable that the Committee should investigate, if they have the means of doing so, the recent expenditure of the Empire, as compared with our own, on dockyard works, including the construction and armament of ships of war, and report the result at which they arrive. For this purpose, they will be furnished by the Earl of Malmesbury, in the strictest confidence, with such information as Her Majesty’s Government have received; and it is possible that members of the Committee may themselves be in possession of some materials for instituting a comparison.

“As the inquiry is of a strictly confidential character, it is not thought necessary to hamper the Committee with any formal or precise instructions. They will understand that the main object of the Cabinet is to obtain the fullest and most detailed information as to the causes of the increased expenditure; but that they will be happy to receive from the Committee any suggestions which their knowledge and experience may enable them to offer, either for effecting reduction of expenditure in any branch, on the one hand, or, on the other, for improving the condition and efficiency of our naval force.

“D.

“1st December, 1858.”

The financial inquiry into the Naval Estimates and Expenditure from 1852 to 1858, might perhaps be considered

a legitimate subject of investigation for a Committee of the Treasury ; but such questions as the comparative force of the navies of France and England ? whether the labour in the dockyards is equivalent or not to the expenditure ? and how to improve the condition and efficiency of our naval force ? cannot be separated from the special charge of the Commission for executing the office of Lord High Admiral, and matters so bound up with the gravest responsibilities of that Commission, cannot be remitted to an irresponsible Committee at the Treasury without putting aside the Admiralty, and apparently condemning its administration as incompetent. Whatever motives may have induced Lord Derby to prosecute these inquiries by a Treasury Committee, no doubt could exist in his mind *after* the report was presented, as to the inefficiency of Admiralty Administration.

The Committee in its Report after stating steamships are now alone effective for purposes of war, gives the following tables and facts as the result of its inquiries :—

	Line-of-Battle Ships.		Frigates.	
	English.	French.	English.	French.
December, 1858 :				
Complete, Hull and Machinery }	29	- - 29 {	Screw 17 Paddle 9 } 26 {	Screw 15 Paddle 19 } 34
Receiving Engines	4	- - 2	- - 2	- - 3
Converting - -	7	- - 4	- - 0	- - 1
Building - - -	10	- - 5	- - 6	- - 8
Total - -	50	- - 40	- - 34	- - 46

Iron-plated Ships Building - - 4

It will be seen from the foregoing statement, that *England and France have at present precisely the same number of steam line-of-battle ships complete*; that France has eight more steam-frigates complete; that, on the completion of the ships now in progress, England will have ten steam line-of-battle ships more than France, and France twelve steam-frigates more than England; and it is to be observed, with reference to the line-of-battle ships "building," that the five French are in a much more forward state, and represent more work actually executed than the ten English: the quantity of work executed on the former being $\frac{31}{8}$ ths; whereas, on the ten building in England, it is only a fraction more than $\frac{27}{8}$ ths. It is, however, to be observed, that of the ten English ships building, three are three-deckers, of which class the French are not building any. *France will also have four iron-sided ships, with engines of 800 or 900 horse-power.*

It is stated, that these iron-sided ships, of which two are more than half completed, will be substituted for line-of-battle ships; their timbers are of the scantling of a three-decker; they are to have thirty-six heavy guns, most of them rifled 50-pounders, which will throw an 80 lb. hollow percussion shot; they will be cased with iron; and so convinced do naval men seem to be in France of the irresistible qualities of these ships, that they are of opinion that no more ships of the line will be laid down, and that in ten years that class of vessels will have become obsolete.

In addition to the fifty steam line-of-battle ships (English) above enumerated as "built," "building," and "converting," there are six sailing line-of-battle ships proposed to be converted into steam-ships.

These six would raise the number of English screw-ships of the line to fifty-six; and if the estimates for artificers, and the purchase of ship-building materials, as proposed by the Surveyor to the Navy, be assented to, the whole could be completed by the year 1861.

At the present rate and mode of expenditure in the dock-yards, it is estimated that forty-three only would be ready by 1861; and according to the present scheme of work, the French would then possess forty screw line-of-battle ships, *and four iron-sided ships.*

With the existing establishment of shipwrights and scheme of work, the number of our screw line-of-battle ships could not be raised to fifty-six before the year 1863, and it may be inferred that, in the interval between 1861 and 1863, still further additions will have been made to the French steam navy.

In addition to the forty steam line-of-battle ships, and four iron-sided ships (French) built, building, and converting, the "Hercule" and "Jemappes," are supposed to be in a fit state for conversion, but it is doubtful whether they are to be converted as line-of-battle ships, or to be cut down and plated with iron.

Two more iron-sided ships are to be built, as we are informed. These, with the two line-of battle ships, if converted, would raise the number to forty-eight in 1861, as compared with the fifty-six English before referred to.

It was calculated last year, by the commission of naval officers appointed by the Emperor to revise the organisation of the navy, that the French would have, by the year 1860, a steam-fleet which, with a proportion of large transports, would enable them to carry an army of 60,000 men, with all its horses, provisions, and materials for one month; and that they may have ready by 1860, forty steam line-of-battle ships, six iron-plated frigates, thirty screw frigates, nineteen paddle-wheel frigates, and twenty-six steam-transports.

The following is a comparison between the force of English and French steam line-of-battle ships and frigates at present built, building, and converting, in respect of guns and horse-power:—

	Number.	Total.	Guns.	Total.	Horse-Power.	Total.
ENGLISH :						
Line-of-Battle Ships :						
Afloat - -	33	} 50 {	3,089	} 4,735 {	17,550	} 29,050
Building, &c. -	17		1,646		11,500	
Frigates :						
Afloat - -	28	} 34 {	993	} 1,239 {	15,090	} 18,690
Building, &c. -	6		256		3,600	
Total Line-of-Battle Ships and Frigates }	- -	84	- -	5,974	- -	47,740
FRENCH :						
Line-of-Battle Ship :						
Afloat - -	32	} 40 {	2,878	} 3,636 {	20,790	} 26,590
Building, &c. -	8		758		5,800	
Frigates :						
Afloat - -	37	} 46 {	1,216	} 1,658 {	17,000	} 20,300
Building, &c. -	9		442		3,300	
Total Line-of-Battle Ships and Frigates }	- -	86	- -	5,294	- -	46,890

In addition, —

France has four iron-sided ships building, to carry thirty-six guns each, with 800 or 900 horse-power.

England has nine block-ships afloat, each carrying sixty guns, with from 200 to 450 horse-power.

As the French Commission observes, supposing a large numerical superiority to exist on our side, it would be more than counterbalanced by the multitude of objects to defend against possible attacks, amongst which our forces must be divided. It will be remembered, during the war which commenced in 1793, that whenever our fleets met

the superiority of numbers was on the side of France, and yet the Treasury Committee shows us that we had then 145 ships of the line, while France had but 77.

On the other hand, the same Report shows that in 1858 the forces of the two countries in steamships of the line ready for service was equal, while France had 34 steam frigates, and England only 26 !

One more extract, and we have done. The Committee gives another comparison, that of the merchant shipping and seamen of the two countries :—

France.		England.	
Vessels . . .	15,175	Vessels . . .	26,219
Tonnage . . .	1,052,535	Tonnage . . .	4,491,377
Seamen . . .	90,217	Seamen . . .	227,411

England is stated to employ, in the Channel Islands and other British possessions, in addition to the above :—

Vessels	10,869
Tonnage	1,040,510
Seamen	72,946

We have here the relative naval force of England and France in 1793, against the same comparison in 1858. The returns of the mercantile marine of the two countries show our enormous superiority in seamen, and incidentally give some idea of the demands our commerce will make upon the fleet for defence. Taking our resources actually available, nothing can speak more forcibly than the figures themselves, or more completely justify the reference of naval subjects to a Committee at the Trea-

sure, but it is surprising that such proofs of the state of the national defence did not produce the immediate reform of the system of naval administration.

The Report of the Committee was followed by a great effort, and in the course of 1859 twenty-one screw-ships of the line were added to the fleet, but whether this number raised our fleet to its due proportion it is now scarcely necessary to inquire, for Louis Napoleon's invention of iron-cased ships has already forced us to adopt a new type of vessel, and bids fair to supersede ships of the line altogether, at least in the narrow seas.

France will have six iron-cased frigates, with 200 or 300 guns, ready long before those we are building can be fit for sea. The papers inform us that the Emperor is following out the principle with great eagerness, and has begun measures for increasing his *frégates blindées* to nineteen. The importance of these new ships has not yet been generally appreciated, but it is of a nature it would be difficult to exaggerate.

From the moment discoveries in gunnery enabled a ship to fire a broadside of shells, it was apparent that mutual destruction must almost inevitably attend an engagement between wooden ships of equal force, and the great problem to solve has been how to resist these terrible missiles. The French invention has solved the problem; for shells break perfectly innocuously against the sides of these iron ships, and if this were their sole distinction it would be enough to give them a decided superiority. It constitutes however but a small part of their advantages;

for while the wooden ship is wounded by every shot or shell which strikes her from a distance of 2000 yards, the iron ship, secure from shell fired close to her, is also shot proof unless approached within 400 yards, and all shot fired even within that distance glance off, unless they strike the iron plates directly at a right angle.

It may be supposed that shot will rarely strike a ship 2000 yards off, but our three-deckers are immense targets, and improvements and discoveries are hourly being made in the new arms of precision, so that in moderately smooth water 2000 yards is by no means beyond the effective range of an enemy, who perfectly shielded himself, can with the utmost deliberation point his artillery. The difference between 2000 and 400 yards is nearly a mile, at every point of which the iron ship continues impregnable, except where a shot may enter the ports, while every one which strikes the wooden ship carries with it havoc, confusion, and often sets her on fire.

But the wooden ship we are told, is to destroy her antagonist by "a concentrated broadside." Now a concentrated broadside requires a ship to be without motion to be fired with effect; even in smooth water, a distance of about 500 yards is the outside limit of its application; the fire must be reserved until the exact point of bearing on which all the guns are concentrated, is attained: the smallest roll of the ship will then throw the broadside over the object, or into the sea; and it is in truth only useful when very deliberately prepared, and when directed against an immoveable object, or one forced to pass a

particular spot, as in the case of a ship entering a narrow harbour in the face of an enemy.

But the *Gloire* is supposed to have speed, to say the least, equal to most of our large ships, and is it probable she will lie motionless, in order to let her opponent slowly range up within 400 or 500 yards, reserving her fire until the midship gun and with it the concentrated broadside, bears upon her and is delivered? The idea is worthy of the advice to little boys, to catch birds by putting salt on their tails; more especially as the ship which has suffered under a constant fire while traversing the distance of 1600 yards, would be in a condition little suited to a manœuvre dependent on mathematical precision for success. It is by far the wisest and the safest course to look the danger boldly in the face—to admit the advantages our supineness has given to France, which by the way there is the most anxious desire not to forfeit by allowing us any chance of profiting by the practical experience she has obtained, for it is a truly remarkable circumstance, that while Englishmen are allowed to see the French dockyards and ships in general, the strictest precautions are observed to exclude them from the *Gloire*.

We may be perfectly certain that the subject has been most fully considered in all its bearings on the other side of the Channel, and that we can tell them nothing they do not thoroughly well know already; but though means may be perhaps found, in the courage and resource of British seamen, to struggle successfully against even

this great element of material superiority, still, with one voice the country demands in justice to its seamen, as to its own dearest interests, that not another hour should be lost in turning our vast resources to account in providing iron ships; for neither iron in the ore, nor drawings of iron ships at the Admiralty, will provide us with the means of meeting the *Gloire*, and the other vessels of her class on terms of equality.

It is said the *Gloire* is wet in a heavy sea when steaming at full speed, a quality in which she resembles all other fast ships; but since she is only intended for the narrow seas, she would very rarely be out in bad weather, and consequently this fact would not greatly diminish her value, neither would the lowness of the ports in fine weather and smooth water, in the least degree detract from her powers of mischief.

If the conduct of affairs generally in the preparation of our fleet of ships from these examples, does not appear satisfactory, the continued delay and hesitation in building iron ships is still more extraordinary, for at the very time we resolved to add twenty-one sail of ships of the line to the fleet so far back as in December 1858, the French had completed their experiments, and the *Gloire*, with three similar ships, had been already commenced!

The general administration of dockyards, as the great factories for building, repairing, and equipping our ships, is of the utmost importance, for on the efficient condition of these vast establishments depends our power of meeting great emergencies successfully, and by far the largest

part of the enormous sums which the legislature places in the hands of the Admiralty, in trust for the public service, is expended on this important department.

It has been already shown in a previous chapter, that the Admiralty has taken on itself the details of dock-yard administration, and that the dockyards, placed under the control of the Senior Sea Lord by his colleagues, have been so managed as to leave the Surveyor little more than a nominal superintendence over the department he is supposed to manage. It is true that this, within the last few months, has been partially relaxed, and the Surveyor has been allowed to give orders upon some subjects direct to the dockyards ; but this concession does not nearly go far enough to give him that complete authority essential to a real individual responsibility on his part, to the Admiralty and to the country, for his department ; and moreover, the former rule may be (and in case of a change of Admiralty probably would be) restored to-morrow.

It has been stated in Parliament, and has never yet been fully answered in the House, that our dockyards are in the worst possible condition ; that their administration is wasteful, extravagant, inefficient, and full of abuses ; that a sum of five millions sterling is wholly unaccounted for ; and that the public money to an immense amount has been squandered in the wanton and useless alteration of ships building when nearly completed.

Such serious accusations at once placed the Admiralty upon its defence, for even if the facts had been reversed,

and the Surveyor had been too much left to himself in the exclusive control of his department, still the governing powers of the navy must have borne a large share of responsibility and blame, if a branch of its administration so exceedingly important, and an expenditure so enormous for which it was answerable, had been indeed managed in a manner so disastrous and discreditable.

But seeing that the Admiralty had itself assumed the direction of all the details, the course actually pursued is most remarkable, and signally demonstrates what has been before said of the total absence of any sense of personal responsibility under the existing system.

In all the debates and discussions on the subject the successive Senior Sea Lords, responsible to their colleagues for the dockyards, have never been thought of as having any individual personal connection with the matter before the public, and the several Boards of Admiralty, all having carried out a similar system respecting the dockyards, and who were in office when these glaring instances of maladministration are alleged to have taken place, have not shown the slightest consciousness of responsibility in connection with the charges, or taken any early opportunity of refuting them.

On the other hand, the Surveyor, whose legitimate authority had been superseded, without a voice in Parliament, (where alone they could be met,) was left, with his department, under a load of obloquy; for public opinion necessarily held the facts to be admitted, when

no defence was made by those who had administered the affairs of the navy; and being unacquainted with the real relations of the Surveyor to the Admiralty on the one hand, and to the dockyards on the other, the Press certainly dealt hardly with a public officer who deserves all honour, and with an important branch of the naval service, which in spite of all the disadvantages it has laboured under, will probably be found to be by no means deserving of the imputations which have been heaped upon it.

When these statements were first made, why did not the Admiralty at once grapple with the accuser, investigate their accuracy, defend itself where it could, and apply the remedy where remedy was required? And how is it that the statements were listened to by the members of former Boards who had seats in the House of Commons, without at once meeting charges which in truth affected them so closely; and even those actually in office seemed to suppose that they could have no responsibility in connection with the dockyards, for the First Lord of the Admiralty in his place in Parliament, declared that he could not be expected to defend the Surveyor of the Navy!

Judgment went by default, since no representative of Boards, past or present, made any sufficient answer to the allegations; but in order to silence the public discontent, a Commission had been assembled to inquire into the state of the dockyards, with the usual prohibition against touching on the course pursued by the

Admiralty, and the Report of which, when it appeared, satisfied no one.

The present state of this question of the dockyards is certainly very singular, for the First Lord being a member of the Upper House, the Board of Admiralty is represented in the House of Commons solely by its Secretary, who is the organ of the Government especially with respect to naval expenditure; while, on the other hand, his charges when a member of the Opposition, have placed him in the position of the accuser of the Admiralty in respect to the dockyard system and expenditure, which amounts to something more than half of the many millions of public money granted in the naval estimates. The noble Lord has never retracted his accusations, and the country expects with some impatience the reforms and retrenchments it has a right to look for at his hands. In the mean time however, the position is most anomalous, but we are so accustomed to strange things in Naval Administration that it attracts no notice, and the only measure adopted by the present Admiralty to solve the question, (both sides of which may be said to be represented by their Secretary,) has been the renewed transfer of their own responsibilities to another Commission out of doors. This time it is a Royal Commission to inquire into the administration of the dockyards, and though most of the members who compose it are destitute of the necessary previous experience enabling them to conduct the inquiry either to their own satisfaction or to the public advantage, still the result may be of great value if unlike

all previous inquiries of the same nature, they are free to enter on the question of the relations between the Admiralty in the management of the dockyards, and the surveyor's department.

The resignation of Sir Baldwin Walker can scarcely surprise any one, considering all the circumstances of his position; and probably changes will be proposed calculated to suggest that whatever may be the shortcoming and defects of the dockyards, they are to be traced to evils connected rather with the internal composition of the Surveyor's office, than to the undue interference of the Admiralty with respect to the details of his department.

The governing power of the navy is bound to take care that an adequate force shall be provided; for though the ultimate decision rests with the Cabinet, the Admiralty is the responsible adviser of the Cabinet on the subject, and no Admiralty with the least sense of public duty would consent to hold office if the force it considered necessary were refused; a heavy responsibility must also rest upon naval administration, when new discoveries of great value and importance have been adopted by other powers, so much in advance of us.

On the other hand, while the governing power is generally responsible for the efficiency of the dockyards, and for the proper expenditure of the public money devoted to dockyard purposes, it abandons its high position, and must leave unfulfilled the great concerns of the navy, if it descends to the management of the small details of the various departments, and thus fritters away

its time ; for no Admiralty can ever superintend these efficiently, and such interference only deprives the heads of departments of that authority, and practical individual responsibility, essential to the effective management of any great branch of the public service.

These obvious principles have been reversed. The Admiralty *has not* exercised its supreme authority either in maintaining adequate forces, or in the timely adoption of new types of vessels. In 1854 and 1855 we had no gun-boats, when most urgently required for the public service ; in 1858, when the subject was delegated by the Cabinet from the Commissioners for executing the office of the Lord High Admiral, to a Commission at the Treasury, our force of screw ships of the line and frigates had fallen very far below the necessary amount, in fact to a bare equality with the French navy ; and now in 1861, France has been allowed to obtain a great superiority in iron ships.

It would be well to try the experiment in the first instance of giving the new Surveyor the proper control over his own department, by the Admiralty limiting its action to a general superintendence, but specially fulfilling its own proper responsibility in keeping up an adequate navy, and in taking care that the ships built to maintain its force are of the most efficient types in conformity with the progress of discovery.

Steam-engines are now as indispensable to ships of war as rudders, so that every ship is produced by the combined operations of the constructor and of the engineer.

In the question of armaments, and other matters, the naval officer must be consulted, and his experience with respect to the duties ships are required to fulfil, is of great value and importance.

No man exists who possesses the qualifications which would enable him to undertake the skilled management of the branches of the *matériel* of the Navy, and neither the constructor nor the engineer would brook the superiority of the other, were either to fill the office of the Surveyor of the Navy.

A naval officer filling the office would neither pretend to construct a ship nor to perform the duties of the engineer-in-chief, but he would have far greater knowledge of the various elements necessary to constitute an efficient ship of war under all the circumstances she may have to encounter, than either, for his whole life has been passed in the practical experience of the subject, and his professional credit and success has been bound up with it.

The joint action of the seaman, the ship-builder, and the engineer, is secured by the superintendence of an Admiral over the several branches which must be combined in harmonious action to produce good results; it would be therefore difficult to improve the existing system in this respect. Whatever course may be pursued however, with respect to the department of the Surveyor of the Navy, the proposal of forming a Board of Construction should at any rate not find favour with those who have had so much experience of the evils of divided responsibility and conflicting counsels.

CHAP. IV.

DOCKYARDS (CONTINUED).

BASINS AND DOCKS.

THE power of sustaining our ships in activity and efficiency during a great naval struggle, must entirely depend upon the means previously organised and prepared, for supplying and repairing them.

The immense strain on our resources in these respects to be expected, and the vast extent of the preparations required, may be in some measure estimated if we suppose thirty sail of ships to arrive at Portsmouth, each requiring three or four hundred tons of coals; as none of our large ships can carry more than a few days' coal, this may often happen, and the urgent necessity of being able to keep them constantly supplied is obvious, for without fuel their movements are paralysed, since a fleet in such a condition would be incapable either of attack or defence, and would be exposed to certain destruction.

With respect also to repairs, there are immense new demands on our dockyard resources arising from the general adoption of the screw, now indispensable to every ship of war, not only from the accidents to which the propeller itself and the screw shafting is liable, but from the great weakness the screw aperture causes in the after-

part of the ship, more especially in the sternpost and rudder, while this great power, working in the extremity, and driving a great ship ten or twelve miles an hour, cannot fail to occasion an excessive strain on the frame. From these circumstances frequent defects arise (and they will be greatly increased in time of war), by which ships may be completely disabled from defects, often capable of repair in one day in a dry dock, but by no other means; so that the maintenance of the fleet in readiness for action will depend on the number of docks always ready to receive ships for repairs.

With the foresight which has marked the naval policy of France, she has made preparations for the supply and repair of her fleet proportioned to her other efforts, not only at Cherbourg, where the basins and docks are on a scale which excite the wonder of those accustomed only to our own, but even greater works of the same kind are in progress at Brest and Toulon.

The basins of Cherbourg alone include forty-eight acres of deep water, which the largest ships, armed, and ready for battle, can enter or depart from every day of the year, and six great docks (two being double docks, capable each of receiving two ships) open out of the basin, and are at all times accessible.

The basins of Toulon will when finished, comprise upwards of eighty acres.

The harbour of Brest forms one great natural basin, having quays of immense extent on its shores, alongside of which the largest ships can lie; but in addition to these

great natural resources, no less than five artificial basins are in course of excavation.

The two basins of Portsmouth, on the other hand, comprise nine and a half acres, or less than one fifth part of the area of the basins at Cherbourg, but their value in comparison, is far less than a fifth, for from their shallowness they cannot be opened except during spring tides, and are even then only to be entered by our largest ships after they have been lightened of coals, stores, and a considerable part of their armaments; supposing them to be available during one half of each tide, or in other words, for one half of the days of the year, $9\frac{1}{2}$ acres for $182\frac{1}{2}$ days, compared with 48 acres for 365 days, is as 1,738 to 17,528, and these numbers may be taken as expressing approximately the accommodation of the basins of Portsmouth, compared with those of Cherbourg.

The docks at Portsmouth are entered through the basins, and are accessible therefore only at the same time as the basins, excepting however one deep dock just completed, which will admit the largest ships armed and ready for service every day, and another dock within the deep dock will soon be rendered also capable of receiving a ship with all her weights on board at all times; but even when this second dock is completed, the docking power at Portsmouth for large ships will still be very inferior to what has been provided at Cherbourg.

The inaccessibility of basins and docks at Portsmouth during the greater part of every tide is common to all those at our other dockyards, excepting Keyham; and

the whole aggregate basin accommodation of all our dockyards put together (when the new basin at Keyham is completed) will be thirty-seven and a half acres.

The importance of the accessibility of docks may be estimated by the possible case of an action in the Channel, without decisive result, when each party would have a large number of ships requiring repair in dock, and it is evident that enormous advantages would belong to that combatant which could most rapidly repair his damaged ships and take the sea again.

The resources of Plymouth and Keyham in docks, daily accessible, are about on a par with those of Brest; but if ships were to be sent there for repairs from Portsmouth, which under present circumstances, is the necessary base of naval operations, the danger of dividing the fleet is too obvious to require comment.

The importance of quays with deep water alongside them, in affording means of coaling and of executing minor repairs, is incalculable, and the disadvantages we should labour under in case of war from the want of such accommodation would be very serious, for not only have we no basins available for such purposes, but no deep water quays to any considerable extent have been provided at any of our ports, alongside of which large ships can lie to coal, or for minor repairs. The space in Portsmouth harbour for large ships is so limited, that even during the Crimean war the duties were often at a stand-still for want of room; and though a very useful addition is now being made by extending a quay, along-

side which three ships of the line will be able to lie, still the accommodation is very insufficient, and a serious necessity exists for a large increase of this species of accommodation.

Cherbourg, about sixty miles from Portland, and seventy-four from Portsmouth, has been prepared as the French base of operations in case of war with England, and what is now going on there is more particularly directed to this object; its basins, docks, and workshops are intended for the supply and repair of the fleet during war, which either in the basin or in the anchorage under the breakwater, may lie secure from every attack except bombardment or fireships. It is fully understood in France that the presence of a powerful naval force can alone secure it from the danger of being bombarded from the sea, and therefore it is little used as a buildingyard; its stores consist principally of what would be necessary to keep fleets in activity under the pressure of war, so that in case of reverses the amount of material exposed to danger may be as small as possible. The docks and basins themselves form by far the most valuable part of the establishment, and these of course, are wholly secure from serious injury by such attack. Cherbourg therefore must be considered as intended, in the event of war, to be the central depot and base of operations of France in the Channel, and no safe judgment of what efforts France may be making to increase her navy can be formed, from what may be observed at that arsenal.

It has sometimes been supposed that Portland will afford facilities of repairs and supplies equal to the advantages of Cherbourg; it undoubtedly will be for coal-ing and other objects a most important station for our fleet, and hereafter it should possess docks and considerable means of executing repairs, but at the present moment such works would be premature, for its defences are very far from completion, and for some time to come it will be dependent for protection on the actual presence of a naval force; neither could it ever supersede Portsmouth as the great arsenal on our south coast; still, should we live to see Portland fortified, it ought to afford great relief to the resources of Portsmouth, which are at present far below the requirements even of peace.

At Portsmouth we possess an admirable harbour, three-fourths of which we have allowed to remain useless from the accumulation of mud, and it is also very inaccessible for large ships from the quantity of shingle which fills up its entrance; some attempts have been recently made on a small scale to diminish these obstructions, the entrance has been somewhat improved, and trifling measures have also been taken to clear away a place here and there in the harbour for a line-of-battle ship to lie; but while France has spent 350,000*l.* sterling in deepening the inner roads of Toulon, we have not developed the capabilities of this invaluable port to an extent approaching either to its natural resources, or to what will be required of it in times of danger, and we are still continuing to limit our operations to this small scale, costing some 4000*l.*

or 5000*l.* a year. Notwithstanding the experience of its insufficient accommodation under the comparatively slight demands of the Russian war, half its limited extent of deep water continues still blocked up not only with mud, but with useless hulks, and still its basin accommodation is limited to an area of nine and a half acres, accessible only at spring tides.

This is the more remarkable, for a space of about twenty acres, including the present mast ponds, in front of the Common Hard, (with the further great advantage of connecting the Dockyard and the Ordnance wharf,) seems to invite us, by the facilities it presents, to make a new basin which would afford an immense addition to the resources of this important dockyard, and this has been over and over again proposed to different Admiralties without success. If however any objection should seem to exist to forming a basin on this side, a much larger area might be enclosed on the north side of the dockyard to enlarge the steam basin to the necessary extent, as well as to obtain ground for farther dockyard extension for various other necessary purposes, but nothing of the kind is in progress, or appears to be in contemplation. The improved wharf accommodation, and the addition of two deep docks, are very valuable measures in the right direction, but that of increasing the length of the docks opening out of the Sheer basin will be far less so, as the basin itself has not been deepened, and the largest ships therefore, can enter them from the harbour only during spring tides as at present.

There can be no doubt whatever that Portsmouth is wanting in its present condition in many important particulars, yet the pressure upon it might be greatly relieved in case of emergencies by Southampton, the basins of which are very far superior to those at Portsmouth, and hereafter by Portland; but a glance at the map will prove the impossibility of any other port supplying its place, except at the greatest disadvantage, for Plymouth is 120 miles down the Channel, and far distant from any French port which could be the rendezvous of a fleet. It is true indeed, under existing circumstances, that we might be forced to send a part of our fleet there for repairs, but it is needless to urge the perilous consequences that might attend such a dispersion of our force in the face of an opponent concentrated in Cherbourg, and having there at his command every kind of material resource a fleet could require.

The ports of Sheerness and Chatham are separated from Portsmouth by a much greater distance, including the most critical and difficult navigation causing long delays in traversing the distances, so that a fleet assembled there would be wholly deficient in those powers of prompt action necessary to meet the possible combinations and enterprises which might be undertaken by a fleet at Cherbourg. This important duty can only be performed from Portsmouth, with Portland as its advanced post; but while at Portsmouth nothing worthy of its importance, or so urgently needed by its defects has been done, or seems to be so much as thought of, it has been confidently asserted

that a vast new basin, capable of holding thirty ships of the line, is likely to be excavated at Chatham! The narrow, tortuous Medway is not often readily accessible for a line-of-battle ship under any circumstances, and to collect thirty sail of the line in a basin at Chatham, would be, in some degree, to repeat the blunder of hauling up the gunboats at Haslar, which when hauled up could not be got afloat again. Instead of being within sight of the sea, able at a moment's notice to put forth and encounter the enemy, what with the difficulties of navigation, the frequent fogs, and the distance, it is probable that an enemy from Cherbourg might often have a start of several days, if not weeks, before a fleet from Chatham could reach that part of the Channel! Nothing could be more contrary to every principle of naval warfare, than to separate by such a distance the naval arsenal where provision is made for the sustentation of the fleet in repairs, from the place where our force must be concentrated, as the inevitable base of operations on our southern coasts. It is true that to meet certain eventualities, such, for example, as a Russian and French alliance, or as Antwerp falling into the hands of France, a great necessity would exist for a naval arsenal more to the eastward, and it is desirable to provide against such contingencies; but it is very doubtful if Chatham would be the best place for such an establishment, and in any case the defects of Portsmouth at the present moment much more urgently demand the efforts of the Government.

If Chatham is chosen because it is supposed to be safer

from bombardment, the answer is, that unless our fleets occupy salient points suited to instant egress to the sea, they can never defend the country, or fulfil any one duty expected of them, and it is very doubtful whether even in this respect Chatham possesses any considerable advantage over Portsmouth.

Such considerations have been allowed to enter into the question from the fallacious estimate of the real importance of the navy which has been entertained of late years. Those who coolly talk of the navy *merely* as the first line of defence against invasion, show themselves singularly ill-informed of the real basis on which the happiness, power, and prosperity of England rests, and should our condition be such as to expose us to the risk of any great naval reverse, the mere instinct of self-preservation would urge upon every sane mind the necessity of giving full effect to our boundless naval resources, which if duly organised so as to be rapidly available in great dangers, would render serious disasters at sea next to impossible, and small ones instantly retrievable.

If the naval resources of England were thus rendered capable of sudden expansion, a part at least of the contemplated expenditure in land defences might be dispensed with ; but, should we neglect this, (which is the only defence by which the horrors of invasion could be *prevented*, as it is also the sole protection of our commerce and foreign possessions), and in spite of the dictates of common prudence, leave all to accident and haphazard, then it is obvious that all our land defences, though

multiplied tenfold, could never preserve those great interests spread over distant regions, which combine to make this country great, glorious, and free.

Our dockyards, the precious dépôts and factories of our naval force, should doubtless be rendered secure from a *coup de main*; but to remove our dockyards from the sea, for fear they may be besieged and bombarded, is distinctly to contemplate the loss of our naval superiority; for such enterprises are wholly impossible so long as the command of the seas has not been wrested from our hands. On the other hand, the possibility of a regular siege of Portsmouth, or the serious invasion of England, may be laughed to scorn when our navy is so organised as to be proportionate to the resources we possess, and to the mighty interests which depend upon it.

It may be desirable to increase our resources at Chatham, but if any very great work should be executed there, and Portsmouth is allowed to remain in its present condition, nothing but the word *infatuation* can be applied to the project.

It has been observed before, that no mere expenditure however great, can give any assurance of naval efficiency, and that a bad system of administration is sure to be an expensive one, facts of which our harbours of refuge, afford some remarkable instances.

The works at Dover have cost already 419,214*l.*, and are by the estimate to reach 650,000*l.* The sole advantage we have derived from this large expenditure consists in the Dover packets being enabled sometimes to go

alongside the quay, known as the Admiralty Pier, to land their passengers, instead of by a boat when the water is too low to enter the harbour. It affords no improvement worth speaking of to the anchorage, which is still very open and exposed, whereas but a portion of the sum expended, applied to improve the old harbour, would not only give superior accommodation to the packets than the new works afford, but would render it available as a station for gunboats, which is an object of real importance.

Again at St. Catherine's, on the east side of Jersey, a harbour was projected, which, after a large portion of the work had been completed, was abandoned as improperly placed and useless for the purposes and objects in view, to effect which the undertaking was commenced. A splendid quay now may be seen running out into the sea, about three quarters of a mile ; it obstructs the run of the tides, and the operations of the fishermen to such an extent, that they are very anxious (as it cannot be wholly removed) that a great breach should be made through it, and it is to be hoped their desire may be complied with, for this side of the uncompleted harbour affords no shelter under any circumstances whatever, and the only possible purpose it could ever be applied to, would be to afford very important facilities for landing a French army with all its material, more especially as roads to all parts of the island converge at the spot it occupies.

This work cost about 270,000*l.* of the public money.

The works on the neighbouring Island of Alderney were undertaken in order to watch Cherbourg in time of war, and to telegraph to England any movements of the French naval forces in that port. Before they were commenced it was a rugged little island, wholly without value in a naval or military point of view, having no fortifications and no harbour. To make one without the other would be useless; and it was decided to render the island impregnable by building several forts, and to create a harbour to hold seven or eight ships of the line, which being on the flank of the fleet in Cherbourg, were intended to watch its movements, and cramp its operations.

But how has the plan been executed? In consequence of the artificial quay, which has cost 800,000*l.*, having been run out in a wrong direction, the anchorage it protects is so shallow that not even a frigate can lie under its shelter without grounding at low water, as the *Emerald* did a few months ago. The island will now absolutely require a large garrison to prevent its falling into the hands of France, to whom from its position immediately between the Channel Islands and the English coast, it would be of great value. In these works, at Dover, St. Catherine's, and Alderney, a million and a half of money, voted for the Naval Estimates, has been expended.

In the distribution of business, new works, and harbours of refuge are committed to the special charge of the First Lord; the superintendence of the Director of Works is entrusted to the Junior Lord, both civilians, while the Director of Works himself is a Colonel of Engineers; it

therefore does not appear that any naval opinion is brought to bear in any responsible form whatever, on questions which essentially demand the knowledge and experience of a seaman ; no landsman can possibly have a practical knowledge of the rise, fall, direction, and strength of tides in various localities, or of the depth of water required by different classes of ships under various circumstances, which with many other matters of professional judgment, require the most careful consideration before sound decisions can be arrived at as to harbours, basins and docks, and the same qualifications are indispensably necessary for their constant supervision, in order to prevent mistakes in their execution.

But for the inveterate habit of the Admiralty in endeavouring to keep everything in its own hands, the sphere of action and the responsibility of the Hydrographer of the Navy would be very widely extended, and if instead of being occasionally and uncertainly referred to, he were placed in his proper position with the power of practical superintendence, and with the weight of personal responsibility, it is not possible to suppose that such errors as those which have taken place in the construction of the harbour of Alderney, could have occurred and have been persevered in during a long course of years.

Again, as the length, depth, and area of docks and basins should be in proportion to the ships building, and likely to be built, it would be rational to establish an intimate connection between the office of the Director of Works and that of the Surveyor of the Navy, but no such

connection exists between the departments, and all the arrangements appear so ill-devised to secure efficiency in these important subjects, that they seem to a great extent to explain their defective condition.

The First Lord of the Admiralty, even when he leaves office, may often be only to a small degree aware of the immense importance of details apparently trifling, but in truth affecting the very foundation on which our naval supremacy when really tried, must be sustained; or if he partly appreciates their importance, he expects to hold office only for a few months, and the expense of the remedy owing to the ever-increasing disparity with our neighbour, appals him, for each previous Board has left behind it a continually accumulating burden, which places the minister in a painful dilemma; on the one hand, shall he allow our preparations still to continue to fall more and more below the requirements of the country, or on the other, shall he risk the existence of the Government by insisting on the vast sums necessary to provide them.

The incidence of blame is an unprofitable question, and rests on the Admiralty system, rather than on individuals, but the practical consideration of *the facts* is of unspeakable importance, for those facts will be found to prove that it is physically impossible for the naval superiority of England to be maintained, if our means of repairing and supplying our fleets, already so much below those of France, are allowed to remain as they are, while she is daily making still farther strides in advance.

That the evil is deep-seated is shown by the circum-

stance that while France has been thus earnestly prosecuting her efforts for providing these elements of naval power, the new basin at Keyham, (included, by the by, in the thirty-seven and a half acres of basin accommodation before given as the aggregate extent of all our basins in all our dock-yards,) has been suspended, the land necessary for sufficient extension of the dockyard which had been offered for sale to the Government was rejected, and has been sold for building ground, of course to be eventually purchased at a vast increase of cost.

The facts above stated may be of a startling nature, and are little known on this side of the Channel, but there can be no doubt that they have long occupied the minds of public men in France, and therefore will convey to them no new information; while there is no safety for this country if we still continue to live in a fool's paradise, which is daily bringing us into a relatively worse position; every argument worthy to influence Englishmen therefore demands, that we should not be afraid to know truths so deeply affecting us, and that the country should vigorously apply itself to the means of remedy where deficiencies exist.

Above all other things it is necessary to provide an efficient mode of administering naval affairs, in the place of the present vicious system, for the faults and defaults of which no one is in effect responsible.

CHAP. V.

MANNING THE NAVY.—MEASURES ADOPTED.

HAVING seen the manner in which the Admiralty has fulfilled the duty of providing ships, and of preparing the means necessary to keep them efficient, in case of war ; it remains to enquire whether the measures adopted for manning the fleet have been more successful.

Ships, unless they can be manned, obviously add no strength to the country, and as previously suggested, the value of any system of naval administration cannot be more conclusively tested, than by its results with respect to these, the two great component parts of a Navy.

Undoubtedly the amount of the seafaring population is the foundation of all maritime strength, but the actual power a country can exert must depend on the number of seamen forthcoming for the defence of its interests, or in other words, upon the means organised by the governing powers of the Navy for securing the services of seamen, when circumstances may demand the full development of its forces.

A further element in the question, now that the principal weapons in naval warfare are arms of precision, and when shells will be universally employed, is the

extent to which the seamen who are available for the service of the country in times of danger, may be trained to the use of the arms that will be placed in their hands.

A large part of the crew of an efficient ship-of-war must now consist of men fully equal to the best artillery-men, and far higher value in the present day attaches to a trained, compared with an untrained man, than in times when ruder weapons and far inferior skill, sufficed to bring a fleet to the necessary standard of efficiency.

The men in ships already in commission would of course be the first available in case of war, and as the peace establishment must form the nucleus on which the fleet would be expanded to meet the emergency, its condition would be of infinite importance from the influence it would have upon the additional forces brought together from various quarters, and composed necessarily of the most heterogeneous materials.

The next resource would be the Coast-guard, consisting entirely of trained seamen, about one half being of admirable quality.

Then would follow such other reserves of men, imperfectly trained, who have bound themselves by special agreement to come forward in case of public danger.

To these may be added those seamen who having declined to join the reserves, would nevertheless come forward as volunteers in a great emergency, from a sense of duty to the country.

Should these sources fail to supply a body of seamen sufficient for the maintenance of the national interests, it

would be inevitably necessary to resort to measures for enforcing the great constitutional principle, that every man is bound to serve for the public defence; but unless this subject had been previously dealt with, the services of seamen could be enforced only according to the ancient practice of impressment, for it would be too late to attempt to modify or regulate it at such a crisis.

On whichever of these sources our main dependence may be placed for manning the fleet; whether upon reserves composed of men who for certain present and prospective advantages, are invited to pledge themselves to join the Navy—or upon volunteers who, when the danger approaches, may be expected to rush to the defence of the country,—or upon the power of the Crown to call out seamen by proclamation, it is apparent in each and every case how great the advantages would be, if the Navy were the service generally sought for and preferred by our seamen at large.

Such feelings of preference would operate most favourably in inducing men to avail themselves of whatever advantages the reserves might hold out; they would immensely influence the numbers of volunteers to be expected on the spur of the moment; and hence would arise the most favourable preliminary condition for securing the zealous services of those who would be obtained under a royal proclamation.

The present moment is from various circumstances particularly favourable for the inquiry into our condition in this vitally important matter. The political horizon is

overcast, and there is a probability of storms soon arising likely to produce great changes in the balance of power in Europe; and should the Austrian empire be divided, at the same time Italian unity is dissolved, events are likely to follow hereafter in Western Europe little suitable to the deliberate repair of our neglected organisation and administration. Besides this, our present force is not only very large, but much exceeds what we are likely long to maintain in time of peace, and should the result of the inquiry not be satisfactory, the large number of men in commission would afford us the best starting-point whence to commence improvements. If deficiencies exist on a subject so nearly affecting the welfare of the country, there can be certainly nothing gained by trying to conceal from ourselves, what we should in vain hope to hide from others.

Before inquiring into the value of the measures now in existence for manning the fleet, in the first place it may be useful to refer to the period at which France commenced those great efforts for naval power which we are now witnessing.

The great war ending in 1815, had established the undisputed naval pre-eminence of England, and the idea of any other power attempting to compete with her at sea was so wholly out of our calculation, that no measures were organised to repair many serious evils the existence of which was acknowledged, and especially to replace the practice of impressment by some effectual but mild system which should preserve to the State the power of

calling seamen to the public defence in times of great danger, by such means as to place them on a similar footing with all other classes, as to the mode in which this duty, common to every man in the country, should be in such extreme cases enforced.

On the other hand the remarkable proofs of the enormous superiority of our naval resources afforded by the results of the previous war, long prevented any foreign power from entering on what would naturally seem the hopeless task of attempting to obtain a superiority on the seas, until the year 1835, when the Government of the day in order to secure the support of those who clamoured for indiscriminating retrenchment, encouraged France to commence those great efforts for naval ascendancy which now force on us the choice of spending millions upon millions, at an ever increasing ratio, or of being left behind in a hopeless condition of naval inferiority.

Then it appeared as if England was tired of the undisputed preeminence she had so long enjoyed as the first naval power, for her naval forces were greatly reduced, and the ships of war still maintained to watch over her commerce and colonies and to represent her power abroad, were sent forth jury-rigged, with reduced armaments, and greatly diminished crews. Line-of-battle ships, some even bearing admirals' flags, left behind them their lower-deck guns (the principal battery); and instead of the spring and energy which is the very life of an efficient navy, the duties and manœuvres of our ships of war had to be executed slowly, and with a painful effort, for

want of men. This policy persevered in for some years, struck a heavy blow at the *esprit de corps* of the navy ; but even more serious consequences of this short-sighted economy followed, in the belief it inspired in our neighbours, that they might secure the supremacy which we appeared ready to abandon, now that the command of the seas so long held by England, seemed too great a burden to be borne by her henceforward.

The naval estimates of the year 1835 have long been held up to admiration and imitation, by persons who have widely misunderstood the true interests, alike of economy and of peace ; for to the reductions of that very year, in a great measure are to be traced the burdens which now are forced upon us by the imperious necessity of providing for self-defence.

The time for such an exhibition of weakness was singularly ill-chosen, for at that very moment we were engaging in the quadruple alliance, which from the complications certain to ensue from entering deeply into the concerns of other nations, rendered it especially unwise to abandon the traditional policy of at all times maintaining a naval superiority.

The result of these combined causes soon appeared in measures for the increasing of the French navy ; and our retrenchments of 1835 speedily produced the necessity of a similar progressive increase on our part, which has continued to the present time.

In the prosecution of this policy, in 1840 France possessed a large squadron of line-of-battle ships in the

Mediterranean, and we were obliged to maintain a similar force, but (no longer without lower-deck guns, though they were very much under manned). But while thus increasing her fleet of ships, France at the same time did not overlook the necessity of providing the means of manning them with trained men certainly and expeditiously, for which purpose she gave fresh vigour and effect to the system of *Inscription Maritime*, which has now in 1861, reached its most perfect development, and is capable of furnishing the whole fleet of France with crews trained by three years' service in ships of war.

The alarming want of organised means for providing seamen for our own fleet was first proved by practical experience when the dispute on the Syrian question brought us to the verge of war. The whole number of seamen required to reinforce the Mediterranean fleet did not certainly amount to more than 4000, but notwithstanding the great urgency of the case, six months elapsed before the first ship commissioned for the purpose could leave England for want of men, and the men so urgently needed to complete the crews of the ships already on the coast of Syria, many of which were very short of complement, were not only of extremely inferior quality, but could be raised so slowly that scarcely any reached the fleet until the crisis was past. Here is the testimony of the captain of one of the ships of this fleet, the present Admiral Sir Maurice Berkeley, who has since been so much connected with the question of manning the fleet, more especially during the Russian war.

“In 1840 (at which period I commanded the ‘Thunderer’ in the Mediterranean), the different captains on that station were in the month of August officially warned that we might expect shortly to come into hostile collision with the French fleet. At this period our ships were on peace establishments, and even then we were short of complement, arising from casualties and sickness. Ships were being manned in England to reinforce the fleet, and men were at the same time raised by the coast-guard to strengthen the crews of ships in commission.

“The first reinforcement of the seamen, or rather persons so called, did not arrive till the month of January (six months after the warning was given), and it amounted to 600 men only.

“Thus we were left for a period of six months expecting continually, (with ships the complements of which were reduced below their peace establishments,) to come into collision with the French fleet, the ships composing which were fully manned, and no means spared to render them in every respect efficient. Add to which, it since appears that the French were fully aware of our weakness, and were only waiting for orders from their Government to enable them to take advantage of it.”—*Admiral Berkeley, Appendix to his Report on the Coast-guard.*

This striking example of our weakness under circumstances so extremely critical, appears to have excited little attention on the part of the Admiralty, or at least produced no measures of remedy; indeed, the difficulties for the future were shortly afterwards much increased by paying off a large number of men when the danger was over, who had been entered on the understanding of three years’ employment, and who would consequently carry back with them to the merchant service no favourable testimony tending to the speedy supply of seamen to the navy on future occasions.

The next occurrence, demonstrating the same fact of our wholly unprepared condition with respect to seamen, was in 1846, when the Pritchard question produced a very serious misunderstanding requiring all the efforts of the diplomatists on both sides to bring the affair to a peaceable issue. This time, the Admiralty became very seriously alarmed at the consequences which might have ensued, and two measures were adopted :

In the first place, the Dockyard battalions were formed for the defence of the naval arsenals.

These however were broken up again about 1852, for though most efficient, it was declared that they were very expensive, and that they consisted of men who would probably be most urgently required for their proper dockyard duties, whenever great emergencies might arise.

The second measure of precaution then determined on, was that the Coastguard should be organised so as to form an efficient reserve for the fleet.

This however was so feebly and so imperfectly carried out, that in the Russian war of 1854-5, only between 2000 and 3000 men could be obtained from the Coastguard, including many men who were much too old for active service ; and now in 1861, after a lapse of fourteen years, the measure is still only partially accomplished.

Nothing farther was done or attempted, though repeated confessions of our inability to man the navy were made in Parliament by persons in office, until in 1852 the Admiralty of the day in consequence of the continued absence of all

effective preparations for the purpose, appointed a Committee of Naval Officers, “to investigate and consider the subject of manning the navy, in all its bearings;” and with instructions to “submit such recommendations as may conduce to effect the great objects their Lordships have in view; namely, the most efficient means of obtaining and retaining seamen for manning the fleet, and in the event of an emergency, raising seamen for the defence of the country.”

The Committee collected much evidence, establishing beyond all doubt the real necessity that existed for introducing a better system for manning the Navy in time of peace, but the still more urgent need of devising measures for procuring seamen in time of war.

A very able paper by Mr. Pennell, the present Chief Clerk of the Admiralty, contained information of the most startling and important character. After comparing the forces of England and France in ships, he goes on to say, “A reserve of ships however implies a reserve of men to man them, without which they are mere useless logs upon the water, if not destined to become fuel for the fire. This is the point on which the organised resources of the two countries come out in strong and perilous contrast; for whilst the number of seamen in actual service on either side is pretty nearly balanced, those held in reserve show a startling disparity: thus the officers and men (exclusive of marines) voted for service afloat in the year 1852-53 were as follows:—

FRANCE.

" Seamen afloat	22,409
" „ in barracks	2,560
	<hr/>
	24,969
" Borne in excess of Vote	5,777
	<hr/>
	30,746

ENGLAND.

" Total number of seamen (including 4500 boys)	28,000
	<hr/>
" Difference in favour of France	2,746."

Mr. Pennell then quotes from the Reports of the *Enquête Parlementaire*, so often already referred to in these pages, "the cautiously framed report of M. Lanjuinais, specially deputed by that Commission to analyse the resources afforded by the Inscription Maritime. After a rigorous exclusion of all men unfit for the service from age, and other causes, or from incomplete training," M. Lanjuinais sums up as follows:—

"On the whole, we believe that, making allowance for all contingencies, we may count on 40,000 seamen eminently fit for war, and on 20,000 borrowed, partly from the 'inscription' and partly from the 'recrutement,' and capable of rendering efficient service if they are properly embodied with the former. We might undoubtedly go beyond this limit; but our ships would lose in aptitude of evolution and in battle, more than they would gain by the addition of their numbers, which would be to fall again into the errors that produced the ruin of our fleets under the Empire, and taught us by bitter experience that at sea, as on shore, *victory belongs to the army (or fleet) the best organised, and the first to present itself on the field of battle.* It must not be said that we are to count as nothing the 'novices'

who have little experience, the master mariners, and the seamen above the proper age, not comprised in the 60,000 who are certainly available, but these must be reserved for service on shore, in transports, and in the defence of the coasts.

“ We have then, without recurring to extraordinary levées, which should be reserved for great emergencies, an effective number, sufficient to have at all times a powerful fleet ready manned.”

“ The above authentic document, endorsed with the sanction of a Parliamentary Commission, shows that France holds in hand a body of 60,000 seamen, of whom 40,000 are stated to be ‘eminently fitted for war.’ Deducting from the total number the 16,000 men (exclusive of officers) now serving in the (French) fleet, there remain 44,000 men in reserve, exclusive of marines, liberated seamen, landsmen, conscripts, &c., who, if called out, would swell the total number to about 120,000.

“ Upon the best estimate that can be formed, it appears that these 44,000 men could be embarked within the under-mentioned periods :—

In a fortnight	.	.	.	10,000 to 12,000
In a month	.	.	.	10,000 to 12,000
In two months	.	.	.	— 20,000
Total *	.	.	.	44,000

“ Such is France’s reserve of men, the great majority of whom having, under the provisions of the ‘Levée Permanente,’ passed in succession through the navy, are

* The number of trained seamen in France has been much increased since 1849, to which date only these returns were made up.

trained seamen. The number in reserve is nearly three times as great as those in active service. To meet this force England can claim the services of the following trained men :—

“ Seamen riggers	357
Coast-guard men, who have signed the agree- ment to serve in the navy	1,527
Total *	<u>1,884</u>

“The whole of these men are under engagement to serve in the navy by civil contract only; the Crown has therefore no power of enforcing summarily (if necessary) a compliance with the agreement. The Coast-guard force, moreover, could not be withdrawn without disorganising, to a certain extent, an important branch of the public service, and hazarding, for a time at least, a considerable amount of revenue.

“Such is England’s reserve of trained seamen! Such her organised resources for maintaining the honour of the proudest flag that ever braved the battle and the breeze!

“It will excite no surprise after this statement, that when on divers urgent occasions, during the last twenty years, attempts were made to man rapidly three or four line-of-battle ships, without being at all over nice as to quality, the result should have been an absolute failure. This is no figure of speech, but a simple fact, of which flagrant proof was given in the Syrian affair of 1840, the Tahitian

* The Coast-guard, which may be said to be our only reliable reserve, numbers just 6,000 seamen at the present time.

affair, and on other similar occasions ; a fact of sufficient gravity in itself, as occurring in the annals of a nation dependent for its existence on its maritime power, but of still graver import viewed in relation with the facilities which France has acquired of late years (by virtue of the *levée permanente*) of rapidly manning her ships with trained men."

The Commission pursued its enquiries with much industry, but was as usual debarred from entering on the course which had been pursued by the Admiralty in managing the subject ; and when the Report was presented, a change of Government had intervened, and a new Admiralty had succeeded to office.

The Report recommended various improvements with respect to the navy during peace, and especially the extension of the period of the engagement of seamen from five to ten years, which change, with many others, was carried into effect.

The recommendations more particularly relating to manning the fleet when in a state of war, were as follows : —

First. That measures should be taken for calling out seamen in classes, in times of emergency.

Secondly. That a large force should be raised of short service pensioners in connection with the system of ten years' entry, as proposed in a very able paper by Mr. Pennell, the substance of which was entirely supported by the Committee, and formed the principal feature of its report in fulfilment of the Admiralty instructions to

submit recommendations for obtaining seamen for the country in the event of war.

The first of these suggestions does not appear to have been for a moment entertained. The second was supposed to be to a certain extent adopted, but it soon fell to the ground, and has been in effect almost wholly inoperative.

In 1854, the Russian war afforded a new practical test of the value of the measures of successive Naval Administrations for manning the fleet, after so many years during which our deficiencies had been publicly and officially avowed.

It is scarcely possible that any war could ever occasion so little stress on our resources. We had ample knowledge of the probability of a rupture early in 1853 when an army was sent to the Bosphorus, in the autumn it amounted to a certainty, and the circumstances were such that it was entirely at our option to choose the moment for its commencement. Beyond all this, while the allied fleet in the Mediterranean was able to block up the Russians in Sebastopol; in the Baltic, where alone any additional naval force would be required, the enemy was held fast by the ice and incapable of making the smallest movement until the end of April, or beginning of May. From all these facts it is apparent that no similar event can ever be expected hereafter to give such a prolonged warning of its approach, and still less, such ample time for preparations to meet it, even after the rupture shall have actually taken place.

Neither were the circumstances less exceptional with respect to the very moderate amount of force required to encounter it, and the perfect security we enjoyed from the possibility of attacks where we are most vulnerable.

In the first year of the war, as it has been observed, not one additional ship was wanted in the Mediterranean, for the squadron already there united with that of France, constituted an allied force far superior to the Russian fleet; and in the second year, when the Russian ships were destroyed by their own hands, the Mediterranean squadron was largely reduced and the seamen turned over to assist in manning the Baltic fleet.

By the time the Russian fleet at Cronstadt was set free by the breaking up of the ice, a small squadron collected with immense difficulty, was ready to dispute any attempt of the Russians to reach the sea; and the numerical inferiority of our squadron was counterbalanced by the powers derived from steam, the Russian fleet being composed of sailing ships.

From the circumstances of the Russian forces being confined to the narrow limits of the Black Sea and the Baltic, not only was the latter the only quarter in which any new force was required, but we had no anxiety whatever with respect to our own coasts, our commerce, or our colonies, objects which under any other circumstances, would constitute so very heavy a burthen on our naval resources for their protection. To such an extent indeed was the security of these interests held to be certain,

that our ships of war were actually recalled from foreign stations without being relieved, to furnish the Baltic fleet with crews, while the whole of our reserves, consisting of between 2000 and 3000 coast-guardsmen, and 300 or 400 seamen riggers, were taken to the last man, for the same purpose. These men, together with 300 or 400 merchant seamen, formed the whole number of seamen that could be obtained, and the crews were completed with landsmen wholly undisciplined and untrained, but owing to an excellent selection of captains, and to a certain proportion of seamen having been supplied to each ship, the fleet was brought to a comparative state of efficiency much sooner than could have been anticipated, so that by the latter end of 1854, it was tolerably prepared for actual service.

Notwithstanding every exertion, the ships were very slowly despatched from England, and many of them sailed in a deplorable state of inefficiency. Sir Charles Napier in his Campaign in the Baltic, describes in graphic terms the quality of the men composing the crews of many ships of his fleet; and the Senior Sea Lord, Sir Maurice Berkeley, whose letters he quotes, rivals the Admiral who commanded it in the emphatic manner in which he laments the inefficiency of the ships, and dilates on the complete breakdown of what he so justly calls our "rotten system," which since then by the bye, has been in no respect altered or improved. In his place in Parliament, after the close of the war, Sir Maurice, full of the vivid recollection of his difficulties

and anxieties, informed the House of Commons of our utterly inefficient state with respect to the power of manning the fleet. "We were at the end of our tether," he said, "and if we had had a naval war, he did not know what we should have done." But this astounding declaration was heard with perfect indifference, and had no effect either on Parliament or on his colleagues in preventing the measure adopted within a few days of this speech. No member of any Board has more earnestly advocated the necessity of repairing our defects in this vital matter than Sir Maurice Berkeley, and it will be remembered that on a former occasion he resigned his seat at the Board because more effectual measures were not adopted; nevertheless, all his anxiety on the subject led to no remedy, and a striking proof is afforded by his failure, that the difficulty lies in the hopeless inefficiency of the system, rather than in the faults of the individuals who at any given time, may compose the Board.

We all must recollect the public exultation at the spectacle presented at the review of the fleet in 1856, which was undoubtedly one of great interest and splendour; it was however that of a steam fleet in its infancy, and a very exaggerated opinion was formed of the naval power it represented. The force consisted of fourteen ships of the line, six block-ships, twelve frigates, and about 150 gun-boats and mortar-vessels; the crews were on the whole of inferior quality, and had been with the greatest difficulty scraped together during a course of two

years, the number having been made up by reducing squadrons on foreign stations, by the crews of several ships sent home from the Mediterranean, and it also included the last man we had in reserve ; still after all, the whole aggregate number including officers, marines, and boys, only amounted to 30,000. The general exultation should also have been moderated by the reflection that this force had not been produced until too late to influence the war which had called it into existence. Every other feeling however in looking back on these events, is absorbed in wonder and regret at the course pursued in paying off a large number of these ships, the moment the review was over. The war had given us the most conclusive practical experience of what had been so repeatedly deplored and proclaimed by the organs of the Board in the House of Commons during a course of twenty years : it afforded startling proof of the absolute nullity of all the small expedients to remedy an evil so nearly affecting the country's welfare, as the total want of means for manning the fleet in war ; and there was the emphatic declaration of the member of the Board who had worked the department while the war lasted, that this effort comparatively trifling as it was, had utterly exhausted our last available seaman ; nevertheless, the review was scarcely over before this force was recklessly reduced, without a single step having been taken by the Admiralty to provide for future emergency ! On the contrary, thousands of our best seamen were turned adrift under circumstances of peculiar aggravation, for so large a

number of men of the most inferior quality had been entered, by the thoughtless misapplication of the new rule of the ten years' entry, that the only men on whom the reductions could fall consisted most unfortunately of our best seamen, who had been abroad when the new rule was promulgated, and had not yet accepted the invitation to enter for ten years. These men knew their immense value compared with the second class ordinary seamen who had thus been allowed to fill up the numbers of the peace establishment. A large part of them had arrived home from foreign stations after an absence of three or four years, and instead of being paid off in a week, had been turned over to the Baltic fleet and were kept serving till the end of the war. They submitted to the necessity of the case with the utmost cheerfulness and good feeling, and as they were by far the most efficient men of the motley crews, so they well knew the value of their services, and felt with the greatest bitterness how little their real value was understood, or their interests cared for.

It is understood that Sir Maurice Berkeley, on whom had fallen the whole burthen of manning the fleet during the war, and whose opinion therefore deserved the deepest attention of his colleagues, most earnestly protested in writing against these reductions, but they were nevertheless immediately carried out.

A reserve force, entitled the Naval Coast Volunteers, had been established by Act of Parliament in 1853, but its utility as a means of manning the navy was en-

tirely destroyed by a clause limiting their services to a distance of 100 leagues from the coast of the United Kingdom. There are now about 7000 men enrolled on those conditions who cost the country a very large sum annually, and the number appears to be likely to be increased to 10,000, without any modification of the terms of enrolment as regards this limitation of distance, although the Royal Commission of 1858 pointed out that this clause rendered them useless for manning the fleet.

It would be well to put a stop to the entry of men on this condition, and to endeavour to induce those already enrolled to agree to serve whenever and wherever required by a gratuity; the men who consented would form a separate class, to which would be added all those who might henceforward enrol themselves, but to continue to add to the number on the present terms is throwing away public money. This course was proposed by Commodore Eden, who as Comptroller of the Coast-guard was charged with the enrolment of the force, and it is to be hoped he may be able to induce his colleagues at the Admiralty to effect this change, for though as the Royal Commission observes the coast volunteers are not seamen, yet we cannot expect to man our ships exclusively with seamen, and a due proportion of coast volunteers would be of great value in time of war as a part of each ship's company.

Now they are quite without value for manning the fleet, as ships restricted to 100 leagues of the coast would be almost worse than useless; and since even this service

can be obtained only in great emergencies, in all our extreme difficulties during the Russian war, no one ever thought of the Naval Coast Volunteers as a resource, except as supplying a very few volunteers for general service.

The most recent effort of the Admiralty to provide the country with seamen to man the navy, took its origin from the Royal Commission of 1858, which wound up its inquiry with an elaborate Report in 1859; but, as usual, the question of Admiralty administration in connection with the subjects at issue, was on no account to be entered upon, and this it is understood was the condition on which the proposal for the inquiry was agreed to, and again as usual, the Admiralty which had instituted the commission, had left office when the Report had to be carried into effect.

The Commission, in the first place, recommended a variety of improvements in the condition of seamen already serving in the navy, and as promotion to the rank of warrant officers had for twenty or thirty years ceased to be a general object of desire to seamen, from certain regulations which in some respects placed their prospects below those of the petty officers, the Commission urged the removal of the grievances in question. These valuable suggestions were immediately adopted by the Admiralty which had sanctioned the appointment of the Commission, before the presentation of the formal Report.

The main part of their scheme however, which was very elaborately detailed, was founded on the principle of

training up boys in nautical schools, so as to be suitable either for the navy or the merchant service, and of binding them by indentures to form a reserve for the navy, in consideration of certain annual payments and eventual advantages in the form of pensions. It may be doubted whether the scheme would have fulfilled all that was expected of it, but it was never put to the test, for the change of Government occurred, and the scheme of the Commission was not carried out.

By far the most important part of the Report was this suggestion that boys should be trained on a large scale by the country, with the view of providing seamen qualified alike for merchant ships or ships of war, and it is to the adoption of this principle we must look for improvements in the morale of our seamen and for the breaking down of the old prejudices.

By such means alone can the class of thoroughbred seamen be maintained, since no man can be made a thorough seaman who has not been brought up to the calling from boyhood, and owing to the repeal of the navigation laws few boys are now carried by merchant ships, while the navy breeds up only a sufficient number to fill up its own vacancies as they occur.

This part of the scheme of the Royal Commission has also not been adopted, but it is most earnestly to be hoped that some measure with similar ends in view, may be immediately carried out by a large increase in the number of training cruisers, commanded by the ablest officers, for no duty can possibly exceed the importance of training boys by thousands, who may in a short time be made good

seamen, and those not required for the navy would be readily taken by shipowners. Supposing such a system to be organised with talent, and carried out with consistency, the most important results would follow in aid of measures for manning the navy, for these lads would carry with them the most favourable evidence of the treatment in ships of war, and would themselves entertain feelings of attachment which would operate with great force upon all occasions when men were required for the service.

The appearance of this Report was soon followed by the plan proposed by the present Admiralty for raising a reserve of 30,000 men, under the title of Royal Naval Volunteers, the terms and conditions of which the Admiralty published in the middle of 1859, and in order to give seamen ample time to inquire into the conditions they were invited to accept, the enrolment was not to commence until the 1st January 1860; in the interim the Registrar of Seamen, and all the machinery of the Board of Trade in its dealings with merchant seamen, was employed in bringing the proposals before them in the most favourable manner.

The Volunteers were to undertake to join the country's service when called upon by Her Majesty in case of emergency, for a period of not more than three years, unless there should be actual war; but in this case they would be liable to be retained in the service only for two years longer, during which time they would receive extra pay.

In order to be always within reach they were bound

to find employment on the coasts, or in short voyages to certain specified countries, and to present themselves every six months before some shipping master; they were not to engage in more distant voyages without special leave; and they were required to undergo twenty-eight days' drill during each year, which might be divided into several periods should it be preferred, and during the time of their drill they were to be victualled, paid, and furnished with lodging money.

In consideration of his promise to fulfil these conditions, each man was to receive an annual sum of 6*l.* as a retainer; and it is estimated that the cost of his training, pay, provisions, lodging money, travelling expenses, &c. would cost 6*l.* more.

The prospective advantage was a pension of 12*l.* per annum for life after the age of sixty, or from whatever time he might be worn out, supposing this to be the case at an earlier age, provided he had been a certain time enrolled in the force.

The only qualification required, except freedom from bodily infirmity, was that he should have been at sea five years, one of them as an able seaman,—no high standard, taking the class of men who now hold this rating in merchant ships; and looking to the amount of skill in gunnery now required to make an efficient man-of-war's man, it is evident that twenty-eight days' drill in the year will place them not materially in advance of untrained men, unless they happen to be called on for service just after the expiration of twenty-eight days' training.

Although the Royal Naval Volunteers would be necessarily only in the first rudiments of training and discipline, nevertheless 30,000 seafaring men of any kind, of whose services we could be certain *when danger threatened from a distance*, would be so valuable that no present expense would be too great to secure them; yet the failure of this scheme may be less regretted, as it would have entailed an immense burden on the country, and the men could only be called out in a “critical emergency,” which they would require much further training to encounter.

In showing how great are the advantages which have been rejected by the seamen, any prospect of the success of the scheme that some sanguine minds may still entertain, cannot be diminished, but on the contrary some effect might possibly be produced in the opposite direction, by making them think better of their refusal.

To enable the reader to form some idea of the expense this plan of raising a reserve of seamen would have entailed on the country, let us suppose a similar reserve had been established in 1815, that the numbers were at once completed to 30,000 men, and had been constantly maintained at that amount down to the present day.

No occasion for calling for the services of the Volunteers would have presented itself until 1840, a period of twenty-five years, during which we should have spent in this very imperfect training and in annual gratuities, 9,000,000*l.* sterling or 360,000*l.* per annum, without reckoning the amount of pensions of 12*l.* a year, to which a large number would have become entitled, as

men may be received in the reserve until forty years of age, and would be qualified for the pension if they remained fifteen years on the roll of Volunteers.

In return for this outlay could the 4000 men required for the Mediterranean fleet have been obtained? It would appear very doubtful if they could have been called out consistently with the promises made by the Secretary to the Admiralty in his speech, which has been so prominently published as expressing the views and intentions of the Board. The only other occasion on which their services would have been called for, would have been during the Russian war in 1854.

As we have seen, each man during the forty-five years which have now elapsed, who had remained on the lists the prescribed period, would have been entitled to a pension for the rest of his days when worn out, or when past sixty, and thus the heavy dead weight in addition to the annual cost of 360,000*l.* would probably be nearly as much more, so making the total cost by this time 600,000*l.* or 700,000*l.* a year! On the other hand, 30,000 men, suppose all were forthcoming, would not nearly suffice to man the fleet in a great war; but instead of 30,000 men, not 3000 enrolled themselves during the year the scheme has been in full progress, a result singularly illustrative of the necessity for obtaining more knowledge of the character of seamen, and more influence over them, in order to put an end to the perpetual repetition of failures in a matter of such vital importance.

Statesmen of great talent, naval officers of the highest

distinction, some especially identified with the question, have all in vain attempted to deal with it, for their efforts have been paralysed by the obstacles that have beset them. It is not the fault of individuals, and at all times the actual occupants of office are above all other persons the most deeply interested in seeing a better system established, and many of those who have failed to produce a good result under present circumstances, would often be most competent, if responsibly and permanently managing the department, to carry out an effective plan for manning the fleet with ability and success. There is no man in the country who would more ably administer such a plan than the present Senior Sea Lord Sir R. Dundas, supposing one to be devised ; but, like all his predecessors, he also has failed to deal with the subject successfully under present circumstances.

It is certainly a surprising fact that seamen should have rejected such a boon as a gratuity of 6*l.* a year and a prospective pension of 12*l.* for life, for so light a return as undergoing training for twenty-eight days under the most careful regulations for their convenience, and during which they would be well-paid, fed, and taken care of ; a fact the more remarkable because they must perfectly well know that every landsman may be called on to come forward in the time of imminent peril for the public defence, and that seamen could never claim exemption from this general duty.

The reason is however explained by the following extract from the speech of the Secretary of the Admiralty

in the House of Commons, which has been printed at the head of handbills, setting forth the conditions inviting seamen to join the reserve, and placarded on the walls of half the seaport towns in the kingdom.

“ V. R.

“ VOLUNTEER RESERVE OF SEAMEN.

“ IMPORTANT TO SEAMEN.

“ *Extract from the speech of Lord Clarence Paget, Secretary to the Admiralty, made in the House of Commons on Monday, February 13th, 1860 :—*

“ I know what seamen are. They are fine, noble, hearty creatures, but men of remarkably suspicious character ; and if there are any people they are suspicious of, it is the Admiralty. Captain Brown reports from the different merchant ports that the men say, ‘ We think the inducement very fair. We think it very handsome ; but they only want to kidnap us. The moment we put our names down they will send us off to ‘ China.’ It is very curious to see men labouring under that delusion. I have been asked over and over again by directors of the great shipping companies, and by men of importance in these commercial ports, for some assurance on the part of the government that the men will not be called out until war is declared. I told them that I could not give them that assurance ; but I

“ also told them that it was perfectly certain there was *no*
“ *intention to call them out* except in the event of a critical
“ emergency ; *that the threat of immediate hostilities, or of*
“ *some national danger which would oblige us to make the*
“ *greatest exertions for the protection of our shores, were*
“ *the only circumstances under which the government would*
“ *call for their services.* If I can reassure them by what
“ I say to-night, I really believe little more is wanting to
“ induce them to flock to the force. (Hear, hear.) It is
“ so far satisfactory that they are beginning to get over
“ this extraordinary idea. *I wish to declare to them that*
“ *her Majesty's government has no sort of intention to*
“ *kidnap them into the navy.* (Hear, hear.) And per-
“ haps I had better add a more practical assurance—*that,*
“ *if we wished, we could not enter them in the navy,* be-
“ cause the number is complete, and except for casualties
“ we have no means of entering any considerable number
“ of men over and above what we have at present. (Hear.)
“ I think that is a very satisfactory state of things, and
“ that the House will be glad to hear *there is no difficulty*
“ *in getting men.*”*

The statement “ that seamen were fine, noble, hearty creatures, but men of remarkably suspicious character, and if there are any people of whom they are suspicious, it is the Admiralty,” would seem to involve an obvious contradiction, unless indeed some special cause should account for qualities so inconsistent with each other, and

* The parts in italics were printed in the placards in type several times larger than the rest of the text.

feelings so unusual in generous minds, existing together ; but, however this might be, the suspicions entertained of the Admiralty were little likely to be allayed by Admiralty assurances, and the special claims any individual member of it might have upon their confidence would be neutralised by the knowledge that his term of office would certainly be short, and might terminate at any moment.

The existence of this feeling is however unhappily proved beyond all doubt by the failure of the scheme, for as has been already stated, though the advantages offered by the Admiralty to join the force are extremely great, and though the men could not be called out except on occasions so alarming that the Crown would be at the same time entitled to summon the population at large by Royal proclamation, yet only one-tenth part of the proposed number of 30,000 have enrolled themselves.

Nor are the causes of these suspicions either obscure or doubtful, but on the contrary they are the necessary consequences of the absence of foresight and consistency in the conduct of successive Boards of Admiralty in dealing with seamen, inseparable from the constant change of the individual to whom the subject is entrusted, who has no organised system to conduct, and no clue to guide him through the labyrinth of petty expedients and perpetual change which have gone on for so long a course of years, entirely without principle or coherence. He has no personal responsibility connected with it ; he has no time to devote to it, affording him even a chance of conducting

it with success; while, on the other hand, the subject of manning the navy is in no sense recognised as a branch of naval administration having a permanent and responsible head to conduct its details. How then can the management of the subject under such circumstances be anything but capricious and uncertain, and how is it possible that seamen can feel anything but distrust and suspicion?

It can never be too often repeated, that the cause of these feelings of suspicion is not to be found in the fault of any particular Board, or of any particular member of a Board, nor can it be attributed to any intentional disregard on the part of the Admiralty either of consistency, or of the feelings and temper of seamen, but it arises from the absolute want of power to act in conformity with sound principles, owing to the perpetual contradictions involved in the general operation of the system.

CHAP. VI.

MANNING THE NAVY (CONTINUED).

MEASURES OMITTED.

THE confidence and respect with which the seafaring classes regard the governing power of the navy must be in every point of view important, and that such feelings do not at present generally prevail is unquestionable, for notwithstanding the best intentions of the Admiralty, the system they have to administer is destructive of consistency, and of course no Board that holds office for one or two years can materially influence feelings based on long experience of its operation. Besides the suspicion so forcibly described by Lord Clarence Paget, there are other difficulties arising from the unsettled disposition of seamen, their hatred of long engagements, the incompatibility of the habits acquired in merchant ships with the necessary regulations of a ship of war, and in no small degree from the traditions and recollections of the last great war, which persons having most influence with them have a strong interest in keeping alive.

A very beneficial course to diminish these obstacles is to be found in the plan proposed by Lord Hardwicke's Commission, to train up a large number of

boys for both services in nautical schools, but it would be yet more advantageously carried out by training them in vessels of war as before suggested, when new habits and associations might be introduced into the merchant service, and would soon produce a good effect in breaking down these prejudices.

While we endeavour to improve the tone of the seafaring population, and to render seamen both more suited and better inclined to the service of the country, on the other hand it is of at least equal importance to render the navy in every respect, compatible with its perfect efficiency, as attractive to them as possible; and in truth these objects of rendering the service popular and efficient are intimately bound up with each other.

Every one must see that the efficiency of the navy cannot be maintained by the frequent infliction of severe punishments, but it does not appear to be so fully understood that other influences must be found to supply its place, if discipline is to be maintained without it. Suppose the remedy were to be tried of endeavouring to make the navy generally preferred as the favourite service, and discharge from it regarded as a severe punishment? then the peace establishment would fulfil the two conditions of being both highly attractive, and perfectly efficient, but not till then!

These objects are worth striving for, considering the influence of the peace establishment on the prospect of getting reserves, and their immense importance when emergencies arise, for the new levies raised to man the

fleet with take their tone and character from the ships already in commission.

If they are manned by orderly, well-affected, and contented crews, the new men will speedily assume the same character; but what can we expect should they join a fleet in which they see constant examples of riot and insubordination, such as have on so many recent occasions thrown discredit on the British navy?

The first two instances of open insubordination occurred in England, and instead of the most searching examination into all the circumstances, and the serious character of the offence being deeply impressed upon the service, instead of a fixed determination being shown to have no repetition of such a perilous example, they passed entirely without official notice or investigation!

Had some error in judgment in any degree led to the outbreak, it was important to guard against similar errors for the future, and in this case it was also especially necessary to convince seamen that if any grievance existed, it had only to be properly represented to be redressed; but above all things, it was necessary deeply to impress upon their minds that nothing could excuse acts of mutiny, and that the crew of a ship of war rising in defiance of its officers, struck a blow not at the best interests of the navy only, but at those of the country.

As might have been foreseen from these examples having passed under the eye of the Admiralty itself, similar cases have been repeatedly occurring since often on the most trifling pretexts, to the great injury of the country

in every point of view, and no one can say what lamentable results they may not eventually produce. It is apparent that these disturbances cannot attract men to the navy, for they are naturally supposed to indicate serious grievances, instead of arising from the combined operation of relaxed discipline, and the original error of letting such events pass by unnoticed ; relaxed discipline acts also in another way injuriously to the popularity of the navy, for it must be evident to the least consideration that in the crowded space of a ship's lower deck there can be no comfort unless order and discipline exist, and unquiet spirits are kept under due control, for otherwise the lives of the petty officers and leading men may be made miserable by two or three hundred noisy, riotous lads, who as ordinary, and second class ordinary seamen, have recently formed the bulk of the crews of our ships, and have been the persons principally concerned in these disturbances.

There is no general ill-treatment in the navy affording any real ground for discontent, for these repeated outbreaks at first resembled the acts of spoiled children encouraged by injudicious treatment, and without having been taught the absolute necessity of obedience at the right time, and did not indicate any deep-seated feeling ; the desertions from the navy also, on which so much has recently been said, are by no means more prevalent than from merchant vessels.

Public opinion was much excited by occurrences so damaging in every sense to the best interests of the country, and from its experience of the chronic ineffi-

ciency of the system by which the navy is governed, the press has entered into the details of naval discipline to a larger extent than probably would be the case if naval affairs were conducted with vigour and consistency, and regulated with wisdom ; but it is very dangerous when the most serious delinquencies can be with more or less justice attributed to the fault of the governing powers, and seamen excused for acts of gross insubordination.

If, as has been said, a good state of discipline is necessary to render the navy popular, it is of the first necessity to establish a conviction that if offences are committed they will be detected and punished ; but punishments, however severe, when most faults are undiscovered, do nothing but ensure the constant repetition of offences, and the ineffectual recurrence of punishment ; while certainty of detection, followed by light and judicious punishments, will very soon effect the great end and object of discipline, namely, the prevention of crime.

The police of her Majesty's ships (the masters-at-arms and ships' corporals), are however very frequently inefficient and untrustworthy, and although there has long been an universal concurrence of opinion as to the fact, which is admitted also in the highest quarters, there is still no remedy.

All the above matters are so many tests of the system under inquiry in its bearings on the subject of manning the navy : and they also serve to show that relaxed discipline does not attract men to the navy, or increase the popularity of the service ; but that a steady course of

conduct, and a constant attention to the feelings, prospects, and interests of seamen, combined with the due preservation of authority, must be observed before such a result can be reasonably expected.

There can be no reason for giving seamen in the navy lower wages than in the merchant service, and it seems absurd to enter the labour market at all to obtain skilled labour and to offer lower terms than the market price, while to attempt to redress the balance by high bounty puts a double premium on desertion. The navy requires men of the highest qualifications, and those who join it have not only to learn to be excellent gunners, but to acquire a large amount of other knowledge, which renders them daily more valuable for the public service. In order to induce seamen to enter for the prolonged term of ten years, they are paid 4*l.* 11*s.* per annum more than those who enter for only five, an acknowledgment of the unpopularity of long engagements; hence it would seem from analogy that in order to secure the services of men who engage even for five years, more than merchant wages, rather than less, should be given in the navy, since an engagement in the merchant service scarcely ever reaches a single year.

Much has been said plausibly enough on various matters to explain why seamen ought to serve in the navy for lower wages, but they do not see the force of these arguments, and with excellent reason, for the principal advantage the navy offers is the pension after twenty-one years' service, which is far too remote to produce any

effect on a class remarkably thoughtless of the future, in inducing them to come to the navy in the first instance, and it only begins to operate in retaining them after ten or eleven years' service ; but even after having served so long, there is not the least security that a man may not be turned adrift by some sudden reduction of the fleet, such as has occurred in many instances.

Very great mischief has arisen from men being suddenly turned adrift on these occasions without employment ; and as a matter alike of justice and policy, men entered whether by special agreement or impliedly for certain periods, if discharged before the expiration of the term, (except of course in cases of misconduct,) might be entitled to receive a gratuity of from one to three months' wages, a regulation which should be laid down by authority, and explained when men are entered.

The pay ought to be fully equal to that paid by merchants; and the best seamen should have superior positions opened to them in the navy, equal to any prospects to which they can look forward in the merchant service.

When these changes have been effected, the vicious principle of higher rates of pay being given for engaging for longer periods may be abandoned, a principle which of itself leads to the inference that the navy is not regarded as it should be, for numbers of men after having served half their time, would otherwise be glad to engage for such period in order to make sure of their pensions ; then men from the merchant service, instead of being forced to engage for so long a period as ten years or to

lose nearly 5*l.* a year, might be entered for five or even three, by which means twice or three times as many men might be trained in the navy as under the ten years' entry, which necessarily reduces the number of trained men in existence to a minimum, and practically bars any interchange between the two services so essential to efficient reserves; for no man can be thoroughly trained except by actual service on board a ship of war, and it would be most desirable to include as large a number as possible of men thus effectively trained in our first line of reserve, if reserve; it can be called, which ought to be in fact an advanced guard.

In the general sense of the word, a Reserve means something you possess over and above the force actually required to meet an adversary; but what we call Reserves would not only be absorbed at the first moment of hostilities, but would supply a very small part of the force that must be instantly forthcoming to meet the enemy; and far from providing any surplus to meet accidents and reverses, they would suffice to man only a small part of the ships we possess, which of course would be useless till crews could be obtained.

The measures as yet adopted would scarcely provide an advanced guard sufficient even for occasions when a moderate increase of the navy might be required for any passing or comparatively trifling difficulty; but under the unfortunate limitations of their services, the reserves could not be called out in such cases at all, and would not become available until the thunder-cloud was on the point of

bursting, since the Secretary of the Admiralty has so authoritatively announced that :

“The threat of immediate hostilities, or of some national danger which would oblige us to make the greatest exertions for the protection of our shores, were the only circumstances under which the Government would call for their services.”

So we are committed to spend all these vast sums of money on reserves which instead of being available when dangers first appear, can never be called out except under the prospect of immediate hostilities! Never did a country pledge itself to so vast an expenditure for such a small return ; and it would be most desirable to modify the conditions to those who may hereafter enter, should the scheme be persevered in.

If the United States of America keep up a militia force of a million of men, surely we need not be afraid to speak of an obligation which rests on the broad principles of constitutional law and usage, and extends to every man in the country ; and since it is equally binding on all classes of the population, so should the willing co-operation of all be obtained by equal laws, securing the inestimable support of public opinion in enforcing it in time of great public peril, when alone it could be resorted to. It has been repeatedly urged upon successive Admiralties, that this power could not be enforced with respect to seamen, for one simple reason : namely, while the legislature has jealously maintained the principle, it has mitigated and lightened its operation as much as possible, and it exists

in a modified shape as the militia system, the compulsory part of which would come into operation immediately, in case of any very great emergency ; but this measure does not apply to the seafaring classes, though they can have no claim to be exempt from assisting in the national defence on their own element ; and they have a right to demand that to them also shall be extended the principles of the Militia Act, with certain obvious modifications, instead of being still made subject to the rude and violent usages of the middle ages, which have so long been obsolete with respect to all the rest of their fellow-countrymen.

The only attempt that has been made to alter the old practice of impressment is by a clause inserted in an Act of 1835, by which the Crown is empowered to call seamen out by proclamation in classes ; but as the power to call out all seamen under certain circumstances always existed, it would seem that the power to call out only a part, must always have been included ; but however this may be, as no farther steps have been taken to classify seamen, or to legislate further as to the mode or machinery by which the object was to be effected, the clause is inoperative, and the practice if ever resorted to, could only be exercised on its ancient footing.

The necessity for dealing with this important question is only too apparent when we sum up the available forces which the various reserves will supply, and compare them with the raw materials of strength we possess in the multitudes engaged in maritime pursuits, who are expressly

exempted from land service by the enactments of the Militia Act, instead of having been made subject to the operation of a comprehensive general measure providing for the defence of these realms as well by sea as by land. The result of all the Commissions, and all the schemes during twenty years of acknowledged deficiency, is as follows :—

There are 7000 Naval Coast Volunteers, who are useless for manning the fleet, because they may not be taken beyond 100 leagues from the land, and they would therefore paralyse the movements of the fleet they belonged to.

The Royal Naval Volunteers consist of about 3000 men (of a proposed force of 30,000) in the first rudiments of training and discipline. A considerable proportion of this small number are absent on foreign voyages, and none can be called out until emergencies are close at hand.

And lastly, the Coast-guard men, who form a very efficient body, consisting of 6000 trained men, of which all are effective, and about one half are seamen of the highest qualifications.

Thus with 227,000 men in the merchant service, and with nearly 100,000 men on the coasts engaged in maritime pursuits, the whole so-called reserves available for manning the fleet consist of 9000 men, amounting to not a fifth part of what we should require for a great war! Does this justify the neglect of other precautions, and do the general results show that the Admiralty administration has been efficient when tested by its success in providing for the manning of the navy!

Making the most ample allowance for matters which may be possibly open to dispute, the facts shown in the foregoing pages have proved by the test of the actual condition of the two great elements constituting a navy, that the long-continued operation of a system of naval administration opposed to every sound principle, has not failed to produce the results which might have been expected.

The reply to the questions proposed for consideration in the first chapter must be, that while the Admiralty has had practically an unlimited command over the public purse, the affairs of the navy have NOT been conducted with that foresight, ability, and persistent energy by which alone great things can be accomplished; but, on the contrary, the incessant change of persons has caused incessant changes of measures utterly destructive of all idea of a consistent course of policy. That from the absence of all sense of individual responsibility the Admiralty has gone on from year to year, with its first duty avowedly wholly unfulfilled; while it is evident that had a real sense of personal responsibility existed with respect to the manning of the navy in time of war, no man would have ventured to rest under it without taking care that an effectual organisation was provided to secure this great object. For upon the navy the welfare of the country is staked, whether we look to material prosperity, or to those nearer and dearer interests which come home to the heart of every man, in the blessings of liberty and security we possess in a higher degree than has ever been enjoyed by any other nation since the world began.

First, among those blessings has been the immunity of this country for many centuries from the miseries of hostile invasion, an immunity to which we greatly owe the other signal advantages we enjoy, for they spring from a long and uninterrupted course of constitutional government, under equal laws ably and honestly administered, which have invested every man with an amount of liberty of thought and action, and of security for life and property, without example or parallel.

The gravest consequences to the continued enjoyment of this precious inheritance are threatened when we cast aside the great safeguard at our command against such a calamity, which the full development of our mighty naval resources would provide ; and with near a quarter of a million seamen in the commercial marine, to hear the Admiralty authorities exult in the fact, that our Volunteer Reserve for manning the fleet in emergencies, when all may be at a stake, has reached 3000 seamen, making up an aggregate including the Coast-guard of 9000, gives occasion for equal alarm and astonishment !

The enormous army of France cannot be approached in amount by any force we could possibly dream of maintaining, and it is therefore imperatively necessary that we should restore the balance by a great superiority at sea ; yet we see that when Lord Derby called on the Committee of the Treasury to investigate the matter, it was proved that the comparative force of the two countries was such, that even if we could have manned our ships, they would have been utterly insufficient for the defence of our wide-spread interests.

At the present moment, when the comparison in ships (except in iron ships) is more in our favour, England has provided a so-called reserve force of 9000 seamen, while France can command in a few days the services of between 40 and 50,000 trained seamen, in addition to those already in the fleet; and while we are doing comparatively nothing in this, the right hand of England's defence, we are wisely making a great effort to repair the long neglect in securing our naval arsenals, by strongly fortifying them. But if we contemplate the possibility of so serious an event as an attack upon our shores, why should it be postponed for the time which must elapse before those fortifications can be serviceable for defence? and, in the interim at least, the overpowering necessity of having vast means of rapidly expanding our naval power can scarcely be disputed; yet we have seen how little this fact is appreciated.

Can there be any doubt how the second question proposed for consideration in these pages is to be answered? The great elements which constitute our naval power have NOT been vigorously and wisely dealt with, and they are NOT so organised as to justify the reliance we place in the navy as the inviolable safeguard of our dearest interests.

We have all read in the newspapers the recent appeal of some of our merchant princes to Lord Palmerston for the reduction of expenditure, and nothing *except* the safety of the country can possibly be more important; but we implore those gentlemen to make some inquiries for themselves, before they give the weight of their influence to the clamour for the indiscriminate reduction

of our forces, which has formed one of the staple cries of a certain class of politicians.

It is very well to say with Lord Overstone, "it must never be" that a French army should land, but here we are exclusively preparing to defeat it, while we are deliberately neglecting the only means of *preventing* it. Depend upon it our great merchants from the days of Elizabeth downwards were right in constantly urging on the Crown and Legislature in past times, that the navy is the great foundation of our wealth and prosperity, indissolubly associated with the interests of Commerce, as with those of the country at large; but the navy was not in those days, to the same extent as it is now, our standing frontier defence from the footstep of an invader.

The gentlemen who signed this appeal will be real benefactors to the country if they will advocate economy as part and parcel of effective administration; and since it has been proved beyond the power of denial that a bad system is inevitably an expensive one, and that no mere expenditure of money can give the least security for an efficient condition of naval affairs, let them not fix their attention exclusively on the enormous estimates, but urge in the first place an amendment of system, when economy would follow; for a legislator, and most especially if connected with the commerce of the country, is bound to insist on the maintenance of an efficient navy as the indispensable safeguard of the Commonwealth.

If they will but devote their enlarged experience and their habits of business to this subject, they will find things

in such a condition that no sane mind could desire to see one seaman paid off until a system had been established and got into working order, by which the peace establishment could be rapidly expanded by an able organisation of our resources, so that efficient crews might be readily provided for the great fleet we have built, but with astonishing inconsistency prepared no means of manning. And they will also probably find that the sums the country would spend eventually in connection with these reserves, should the terms be closed with by 30,000 men, might suffice to provide all that would be required to establish the security of the country. A great saving would also ultimately accrue from the much smaller peace establishment that will suffice in quiet times, when it may be regarded not as the principal force for emergencies, but as the nucleus of the great and rapid expansion which may be relied on, when the foundations of our maritime strength have been thus rendered available.

In the whole preparations * emanating from Government for the defence of the country, nothing is more surprising than the neglect of the means of defence in which our great superiority lies, namely, Men.

The prospect of invasion is considered so remote, and the consequences would be so serious if it were so much as attempted, or could it ever be even thought possible, that the whole community might be expected readily to assent to a ballot, providing for a reserve force over and above

* The Rifle Volunteers originated entirely in the patriotic feelings of the people, and not in the least with the Government.

the regular militia. The younger and least encumbered men would be taken for the latter when volunteers failed ; while a great militia of Reserve might be formed of the remainder to the amount of 300,000 men in Great Britain, to be divided by nominal lists into regiments and companies, with depôts at convenient places for arms and clothing, as the great national reserve for the sole object of meeting serious invasion ; but all training should be entirely voluntary, and they should not be called out even for muster except in case of great public peril. This would form the grand reserve, and to the objection that if untrained the force would be useless, the reply is that should danger threaten, voluntary training would become general, and, when imminent, the reserve militia would itself enforce the demand that it should be immediately embodied.

Were this measure combined with an intimate connection of regiments of the line with particular districts, and if each militia depôt were composed of old soldiers of the regiment so connected with it, the result would add immensely to our strength, by placing us fully two months in advance of our present position, without inflicting the least present inconvenience on one individual. If the people of England rose as one man in case of attack, without some previous plan, it would be too late to organize one, and they would meet together as a mob in utter confusion, whereas if a measure of this kind had been prepared and fully explained, they would have their places provided, ready for them to fall into ; and even if

the storm burst ever so suddenly, their instruction as soldiers would instantly commence.

The rifle volunteers, (who would of course be exempted from the operation of the ballot), and the regular militia, would form with the regiments of the line a powerful first line of defence, which would daily be recruited by the regiments of the militia army of reserve, which under such circumstances would rapidly become effective.

This may appear somewhat apart from the question of manning the navy; but the great principle of all men being bound to serve in case of imminent peril can only be carried out as regards seamen, consistently with the inestimable object of preserving their affections, by applying to them no exceptional system, but by treating them in all respects in the same manner as their fellow-countrymen. On the other hand, they can have no claim to be exempted from this most important duty of every free man, and if too severe a service was formerly exacted from them, the State cannot now give up its just claim on them for the public defence, to which they are so essential; for it is by sea alone that the country could be saved from the horrors which war on our own soil would inevitably cause, whatever might be the ultimate result; and the country may depend upon it that seamen will have no desire to avoid the obligation, if it is claimed under fair conditions.

An Act of Parliament should be therefore passed to establish a General militia system, providing for the national defence by sea and by land, and a sufficient proportion of seafaring persons of each class, such as fishermen,

boatmen, seamen in foreign and in the coasting trade, so far as they can be distinguished, all hitherto exempted from the militia and left to the tender mercies of impressment, should be chosen by ballot, and nominal lists made out at the different ports; the obligation of each man so chosen to serve in the navy in case of great public danger being noted on the registration lists, and on each ship's muster-roll. As in the reserve militia on shore, not a man could be called out until the danger was imminent, nor undergo training except at his own choice, but great advantages should be held out to induce them to do so; and if the plan proposed of training up great numbers of boys in the navy for the merchant service were followed out, there would be a ground of early recollections, which would insure a rapid progress to efficiency.

It may be said that the militia are bound only to serve within the United Kingdom, but landsmen could of course only be employed for the public defence within the kingdom, and seamen, with effect, only upon the sea; the term, therefore, "within the United Kingdom," has probably grown up from seamen having been hitherto altogether excluded from the operation of the Militia Act, and if the term "for the defence of the country" were used in the new Act, it would probably meet any difficulty of this kind. Ever since the militia principle was adopted, seamen have been, in time of war, forced to serve without any limitation; but it would appear perfectly consistent with the principles which apply to all, and equitable to seamen themselves, if under the same general

regulations applicable to all classes in other respects, the balloted seafaring men were required to serve in a great emergency on their own element, but only for the defence of the country. To limit this, however, to any particular distance from the shore, would deprive the force of all utility, as exemplified in the case of the Naval Coast Volunteers; but if their service were confined to the Channel fleet, and to the squadrons of coast defence, composed of forces acting especially in defence of the country, even though they might follow out that object at a distance from its coasts, this restriction would meet the objection, and probably large numbers of men, of those once thus embarked, would readily volunteer for general service.

The maritime population must always be the first called into action for the protection of the country, and the duty must necessarily in some particulars differ from that required of the land militia; therefore it would be only just that additional advantages should be extended to the seafaring classes, from whom earlier and more onerous duties will be probably required, and whose services are of such inestimable importance to the country at large; but this subject would lead far beyond the limits proposed for this work.

Very great advantages would also attend the application of the same system to the officers as well as to the men of the commercial navy, whose services would be of the greatest benefit to the country in case of any great

peril arising, and would be cheerfully given if they were dealt with in a kindly and liberal spirit.

With respect to the urgent question of retrenchment, the inference to be drawn from many facts that have appeared, would very strongly support the opinion that vast sums are wasted under the existing system which would be saved under a more effective one. The waste of money on the harbours of refuge, the lavish expenditure on our unavailable and ill-devised Volunteer Reserves, with the heavy eventual expenses so recklessly incurred in them, give strong support to this opinion. Supposing 30,000 men had accepted the terms, and joined the Volunteer Reserve, the State would have had no command over their services until hostilities were on the verge of breaking out, and they would have provided no means of gradually expanding the peace establishment when dangers threatened from a distance. Hence would still have continued the necessity for maintaining a far larger fleet during peace than need be kept up, if, instead of reserves for the last emergencies, the Admiralty had provided advanced guards available when clouds appeared in the distance, thus investing the ruling powers with assured means of gradual increase as the storm seemed to draw nearer. When we shall be able to claim the services of some 30,000 trained seamen at the approach of hostilities, of whom a large proportion could be called out when the danger was comparatively remote, with 50,000 or 60,000 more forming the great ultimate reserve to be resorted to in extreme public danger, then economy in a comparatively

small permanent peace establishment would be entirely reconcilable with prudence ; but, as long as our so-called reserves only become available in great emergency, even supposing them to be considerable in amount, a very large force in peace must always be maintained. While however the whole number of seamen available only amounts to 9000 men inclusive of the Coast-guard, it is obvious that even our present very large peace force cannot be safely reduced, looking to the state of Europe, until a system giving great and rapid means of expansion has been effectively organised.

The choice, in short, rests between devising means of rapidly expanding our force when dangers appear to be drawing nigh, or of maintaining a war establishment during peace. When the former shall be brought into existence, reductions may follow, and the economy to be thus effected may be imagined from the fact that 10,000 men afloat cost at least 700,000*l.* sterling, counting the expenses of the ships they are employed in. Now, if we put a stop to the entry of naval volunteers, and re-establish the scheme on sounder principles after passing the General Militia Act, seamen would eagerly flock to the Reserves to secure themselves from the contingency of compulsory service, and it is probable that the effectual measures by which all contingencies would be provided against, might be covered by the sums the present Reserves would in the long run cost. In this case all saved from the peace establishment would be pure gain, not only in the reduction of expense, but in the

advantages the country would gain in substituting an effective system for one which appears to have combined the maximum of expense with the minimum of efficiency.

Every one will remember in 1858 the omnibuses driving about the streets of London with sailors' flags and music, as if we were in the midst of a hot war, instead of requiring merely a small precautionary increase of men during a time of peace. Those efforts, aided by a 10% bounty (a most costly affair, for every man already in the fleet received half bounty,) brought in men slowly, in limited numbers, and of very inferior quality, while such demonstrations would at any time afford a pretext of alarm to other powers.

Although the present state of the world suggests the prudence of putting our house in order without delay, circumstances are infinitely more favourable for the purpose than they are likely to be after the changes and events this year is likely to produce. If it is objected that our condition is so bad that the less said about it the better, the answer is, that bad as it may be, it is daily growing relatively worse. The facts are not to be concealed, and are far better known in France than here, while the only hope of a remedy is by rousing public opinion to the necessity of assured means being organised to provide any increase of the fleet that might be required during the continuance of peace, and great reserves for war. Until the country is thus provided the present large peace establishment must be maintained.

CHAP. VII.

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE NAVY.

SHIPS, and Seamen, have been chosen for special consideration not because they more especially show the inefficiency of naval administration, but because as the great elements which constitute a navy, it is to provide them in due proportion to each other that the Admiralty may be said to exist, and therefore their condition conclusively shows the success or failure of the system.

If further proofs of its inefficiency were required, there is hardly one subject which would not show similar results, excepting in those departments superintended by permanent heads. With respect to ships, although the Admiralty has entirely failed to recognise its great responsibility in maintaining an adequate force, yet our ships as models are decidedly superior to those of France, and the condition of the dockyards is also surprisingly good, considering all the difficulties under which they have been placed.

We have seen that our ships are very badly manned, and that habits of insubordination appear to have been established. In the unlucky case of the "Princess Royal," where a series of cross purposes certainly would have afforded some excuse, (if anything could excuse acts

likely to produce consequences so perilous to the best interests of the country,) out of 104 rioters, there were only three able seamen, and the ship during the whole period of her commission had been under constant difficulties from the insubordinate spirit which prevailed in a very young and inexperienced crew ; while (as is the rule and not the exception), the petty officers could exercise no authority because their position is not so established as to support them against the intimidation exercised under a general relaxation of discipline, which is the bane of all comfort, as it is of all efficiency.

With respect to officers, from the highest to the lowest there is but too much ground for dissatisfaction. The Commanders-in-Chief at the home ports are the mere repeaters of the electric-telegraph, and the smallest movement of the Channel squadron is dictated by the Admiralty ; is it surprising that discipline is relaxed when the officers who are to maintain it are deprived of all authority ? is it surprising that the most essential, nay vital parts of naval administration are neglected, when the whole time of the Board is frittered away in taking the duties out of the hands of the officers to whom they have been nominally entrusted ?

The degree in which the self-confidence of the service has been lowered by this petty interference is incalculable, and officers allowed no free action in the pettiest details, are apt to incur a fear of responsibility which may produce serious consequences hereafter, for when great emergencies arise it will be wholly out of the power of the Admi-

rality to continue to direct every detail ; and many duties, on which most important events may turn, will stand still until the new state of things is understood.

The prospects of officers in general are very much the sport of accident and favour, for though in some cases the patronage has been exercised with the fairest intentions, their interests are left almost entirely to the First Lord, who can have little knowledge of their respective merits or claims, and he is too often under the influence of the political exigencies of his party. The consequences are seriously felt in the general dissatisfaction that prevails, and no part of the system more urgently requires improvement than the position of officers, and the principles on which their interests are dealt with.

To turn to another most important subject : the introduction of steam has opened a wide new field for naval manœuvres, rendering the investigation of the subject by actual experiment, and the education of officers in the new combinations it has rendered possible, matters of the first necessity ; nevertheless, in spite of repeated and urgent representations, scarcely a ton of coals has been expended for the purpose, unless it has been within the last few weeks, when it is stated that a small squadron was allowed to perform a few manœuvres under steam. It would appear that the Channel fleet might have been employed in working out this great question, and that a code of instructions and signals might have been founded on the result, while the practice would have been invaluable to the country, since frequent collisions

and great confusion must inevitably occur if a fleet is to make its first experiments in steam tactics in the face of an enemy. Should disasters ensue, the admirals and officers must bear the blame, though the whole responsibility would justly rest on the Admiralty, who have refused to allow steam manœuvres to be practised, and forbidden the expenditure of coal necessary for the purpose.

Why may not the Admirals, who will be held responsible by the country in time of war, be allowed to command their own squadrons and to render them efficient? Though of course it is necessary to put a check on the expenditure of coal, a certain quantity should be allowed for the exercise of manœuvres, in the same manner as powder and shot is allowed for that of the guns.

Another very important point is, that we have no engineers in reserve for war, and those in the navy have generally very little practice. This leads to a point in the French system not previously touched upon; there are 3500 engineers belonging to the French navy, of whom, in times of peace, the most part are allowed to serve in merchant steamers of any country, and France would be enabled by this means to provide every ship of the navy in time of war, with engineers in full practice.

The Emperor, sensible of the great importance of this class, took the opportunity of his visit to Algiers to raise their position, with the best effect on their zeal and attachment to his service.

It has been thought desirable to give this additional information of the results of the system, to enforce the imperative necessity of a reform, and it only remains to offer a few observations as to the direction in which it would seem desirable to seek for a remedy.

The reproach is not unfrequently made against any one who may devote himself to the thankless task of proving the mismanagement of something connected with the interests or the self-love of a number of persons, that he does not show how the evils he complains of are to be remedied : but it is at least half way to a remedy to prove that defects exist in matters where powerful interests are concerned in their removal, and no subject can more vitally affect the interest of every man in the country than the deplorable condition of naval administration which these pages have proved.

There is another consideration also of some weight, for if detailed proposals of remedy are suggested at the same time that the defects are exposed, there is a probability that the defects, which no one can dispute, may be put aside and forgotten, while the scheme of reconstruction, on which every one would differ, may absorb whatever notice may be given to the work ; and thus interested parties, by attacking the scheme proposed, may divert attention from the facts, which, standing alone, would of themselves lead to the remedy by proving its urgent necessity.

On these grounds it was at first intended to confine this work to the former part of the subject, and as this

intention is departed from with reluctance, the suggestions for a remedy will take the shape of a mere outline, and be stated as shortly as possible.

It is apparent that the reconstruction of the navy must commence with that of the governing power, and any attempt to remedy particular evils must be fruitless, if the great evil of all remains untouched.

With respect to the question whether the presiding minister should be a civilian or a naval man, whichever may be selected will have much to learn ; for if no civilian has an amount of knowledge of naval affairs which can qualify him for the task, it would be difficult to find a naval man whose parliamentary or administrative experience fitted him at once for the office. There can be no doubt however, that a naval man possessing these qualifications would be immeasurably the more efficient, of course supposing him to be well acquainted with his own profession. The principal objection that has been insisted on against a naval man holding this office is the supposition that he would be biassed in favour of those who had served with him ; at least he would know the value of those he might favour, while the First Lord often lavishes his patronage without the slightest knowledge of the professional merits of those he bestows it on. Moreover, in the naval man there is the inestimably important check of the opinion of the navy, which scarcely operates at all on one wholly unconnected with the profession. It has been before observed, that we are accustomed to so many strange things in naval matters that nothing surprises us ;

but imagine such an argument as this being used to take legal patronage out of the hands of the Chancellor, and to give it to some one unconnected with the profession, who could have no bias (*except that of kindred or politics*), being perfectly ignorant of the merits of all. It would be going only one step farther (to complete the analogy with the naval practice), to urge that no lawyer should hereafter fill the office of Chancellor, and to return to the ancient custom of an ecclesiastic holding the Great Seal.

But neither naval man nor civilian could fill the office with success excepting upon one condition, namely, that the Minister should find responsible permanent heads presiding over the great elements, Ships and Men, as well as over the other branches, each capable of affording the fullest information respecting his department, and of giving sound advice and mature opinions, founded upon long experience of its administration.

Whatever may be the special arrangements or system adopted, common sense shows the impossibility of a civilian administering affairs so important, and of which he is personally ignorant, without affording him these means of information; a view which receives tenfold force in connection with the perpetual change of Government rendering it impossible that any minister, however able, can remain long enough in office to become competent to superintend, combine, regulate, and, if need be, reform, affairs so complicated and multifarious.

To surround the statesman with a board of five members, each absolutely without defined responsibility or

functions, and meeting together without unity of opinion, to manage a mass of heterogeneous matters comprehending every variety of detail, while amongst the tangled mass are confounded the most essential and vital questions, would seem to be the worst form of administration that could be possibly conceived.

In Parliament the First Lord generally speaks in his own person, as if every measure past, present, or contemplated, was the fruit of his single will, and rested on his sole responsibility; he appears to act independently of his colleagues, and it is well known to the service that measures are constantly adopted, which the members of the board openly condemn.

This collective responsibility is therefore a cloak to cover blunders, to be cast aside, or used as convenience may dictate, and the facts which have been before stated have proved that it is destructive to the efficiency of the public service, by shielding from the public eye those who should be responsible to the country for the faults or defaults we have so often to regret.

The system should be reconstructed with the view, among other things, of placing some check on reductions being made for party purposes, to the injury of the navy, and often to the immense eventual increase of expense to the country.

With respect to officers, it would be of the utmost importance to endeavour to protect their interests from the influence of political jobbing, and the perpetual personal solicitation which in the great majority of cases is

the history of every man's professional life ; while promotion, which officers justly regard as their birthright in reward for good service from early boyhood, should no longer be given as the personal favour of one whose connection with the navy begins late in life, and lasts only a few months. Various other changes are urgently required, and amongst them that of raising the position of Lieutenants and Mates, with the view on the one hand of obtaining the services of officers in the junior rank, and on the other of relieving the list of Lieutenants from its present depressed condition ; but the subject is too extensive to be dealt with here.

The principles, then, on which naval reconstruction should be founded appear to be as follows : —

1st. The three great branches of naval administration should each form a department presided over by a permanent head, who should be responsible to the Minister, and with him to the country.

2nd. The details of these departments should be carried out by those responsible for them, and not by the supreme authority.

3rd. The substitution of the principle of permanency in the general management of Naval affairs, for the perpetual change which now so greatly prevails.

4th. To provide for the interests of officers and of the country, by giving greater security against promotions being considered as private patronage rather than as a public trust, and made subservient to family or political interests.

5th. The abolition of collective, and consequently nominal responsibility, and the establishment of the principle of direct personal responsibility of the minister who presides over naval affairs, for all his measures, and generally for all the departments, in connection with their respective heads.

In conformity with these principles it is proposed that the Minister of Marine, Secretary of State for the Navy, or whatever title may be preferred, should be a Cabinet Minister, who would preside over the administration of the Navy, and be individually responsible for all his acts.

That the several branches which in the aggregate constitute the administration of the Navy, should be grouped under three great departments :—

1.	2.	3.
THE CAPTAIN-GENERAL OF THE FLEET.	THE SURVEYOR-GENERAL OF THE NAVY.	THE COMPTROLLER OF THE NAVY.
HAVING CHARGE OF THE PERSONNEL OF THE EXECUTIVE DUTIES OF THE NAVY.	RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MATERIEL IN ALL ITS BRANCHES.	HAVING THE SUPERVISION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE.

It is intended that the Minister should have full power over these departments.

The duties of the Head of the Executive Department would in many respects resemble those of the Adjutant-General of the Army, of course comprehending the superintendence of the measures for manning the navy.

* It has been said that Admiral of the Fleet would be a better title, in which the writer would agree, were it not already held as an honorary distinction. The alterations from the scheme in the first edition, consist principally in the proposals being presented in a clearer form.

Nothing farther need be said to show that it can be conducted neither by six Lords of the Admiralty, who would be in continual conflict on such a subject, nor by one member of the Board overwhelmed with other business and having no separate responsibility ; nor by any means whatever but permanent management and direct personal responsibility.

This department would be presided over by an Admiral of high professional rank and great experience, and would comprehend the following highly responsible duties : —

The General superintendence of the fleet in commission.

The discipline of the navy.

The manning of the navy in peace and war.

The superintendence and training of the Reserves.

The Royal Marines.

The Medical Department.

The Submission of lists of officers for promotion and appointments to the Minister.

Courts-Martial.

The following officers would aid the Head of the Executive Department by managing the details of the various branches under his superintendence.

1st. Inspector-General of the Navy.*

This officer would be to the navy at large, what the

* If the title of Admiral of the Fleet were adopted, this officer would be Captain of the Fleet.

Captain of the Fleet ought to be in each fleet or squadron, the head of the staff, and he should be appointed by the Head of the Executive. He would inspect all ships of war at home, and before leaving England, with the view of maintaining the efficiency of the fleet. He would keep records for his superior of the qualities and merits of officers as shown by their services, and the effective state of the duties entrusted to them. Ships arriving home from foreign service would be inspected especially with the view of ascertaining the merits of their commanders. He would be the organ of the Admiral of the Fleet in watching over the discipline of the navy, and would be expected to establish a greater amount of uniformity than now exists in the state of discipline and efficiency, while his influence would be very great in preventing just causes of discontent, and in investigating to the very bottom every case of insubordination.

To his superintendence would be committed the whole system of training reserves, and the vessels employed in training boys, that this most important duty might be conducted with perfect uniformity, and the utmost care taken to create feelings of attachment to the service.

2nd. The Commodore of the Coast-Guard.

This officer, besides the command of the Coast-Guard, would manage the Naval Coast Volunteer Reserves under such modifications as might be decided on.

3rd. The Superintendent of the Naval Reserves.

The head of this branch would carry out the great system, rendering the seafaring population available for great emergencies, under the general Militia Act, and would watch over all arrangements respecting the men chosen by ballot, under its provisions; he would also superintend the advanced reserves provided for increasing the fleet on minor occasions.

This officer would require large assistance, and whether he could be aided by the machinery of the Board of Trade, would be worthy of consideration.

4th. The Adjutant-General of Marines.

This invaluable corps would remain under the management of one of its own officers.

5th. The Director-General of the Medical Department.

This would remain as at present constituted, under the general superintendence of the executive head of the navy.

6th. The Hydrographer of the Navy.

This officer should be invested with the practical superintendence of the surveying service, and of measures for the improvement of harbours.

The duties of the Head of the Executive are doubtless very numerous and important, but as each minor branch

of his department would be managed in all its details by a permanent head, they would be far less onerous than those which now devolve on the Senior Sea Lord.

A very general opinion prevails that there should be a Commander-in-Chief responsible for the executive duties, and a Minister of Marine to superintend the *matériel* and finance; but such an arrangement would occasion conflicts and jealousies, and considerable advantages it is believed would arise from not thus dividing the two great elements of the navy, and from giving the Minister the benefit of the advice and assistance of the head of the executive branch of the navy, which he could not receive from a Commander-in-Chief.

The superintendence of the details of the department would be the duty of the Head of the Executive, the supreme power with the Minister, on whom the ultimate responsibility for all the departments would rest.

The second great department would consist of the management of the *matériel* of the navy, and the following officers would direct the various branches, under the head of the department,

The Surveyor-General of the Navy.

1. The Surveyor and Chief Constructor.

The duties of this officer (with the necessary staff of scientific assistants) would include the construction and repairs of ships.

2. The Engineer in Chief.

This officer would superintend all questions concerning the purchase, repairs, and arrangements relating to steam machinery.

3. Director of Works.

All works relating to dockyard buildings, docks, basins, and quays, would be executed under the Surveyor-General of the Navy.

The Admiral-Superintendents of Dockyards should also perform their duties under the Surveyor-General, and some other matters in connection with stores and accounts should be under his superintendence, but enough has been stated to show the nature of the proposed change.

It would be the Surveyor-General's duty to superintend these several branches, to harmonise their general working, and to bring before the Minister everything that might be required to maintain them in due proportion to each other, and in the aggregate sufficient for the public interests. The Minister would have full power over the whole, and to him the Surveyor-General would be responsible; while both would be responsible to Parliament and to the country.

The third and last great division of Naval Administration would consist of the Civil Departments.

The Comptroller of the Navy.

1. The Accountant-General.

2. The Storekeeper-General.

3. The Comptroller of Victualling.

The Comptroller-General would be the medium of communication with the Minister with respect to these departments, and he would exercise a practical supervision over them ; he would be responsible to the Minister, and with the Minister, together with the heads of each department, to the country.

By these arrangements every great interest of the navy in all its branches would be placed under direct personal responsibility, and the Minister would be able at all times to obtain the fullest and most accurate knowledge on every subject comprehended in naval administration. He would be surrounded on all sides by competent and responsible advisers as to each element of the navy, and he would be thus enabled to watch over the several departments, so fully laid open to his investigations, with effect. The state of accounts, the amount of stores and provisions, the *matériel* of the navy, the regulations affecting officers, ships, and dockyards, stores and accounts, the discipline, the manning of the fleet, the distribution of forces, and all the great affairs of the navy would be placed within his grasp ; but his supervision would be from a high position, taking a general view of the whole system, and the power of general control would not be sacrificed to entanglement in petty details ; while the admirals at the ports would be again responsible officers, carrying on the duties of their stations, and not the mere repeaters of the electric telegraph.

Under the plan sketched out, providing competent officers able to devote their time to the executive functions, we should soon cease to hear of such events as this succession of mutinies, which have had so lamentable an effect on the self-respect of the service, and have encouraged foreigners to look upon the British navy as having entered on a period of decadence and utter disorganisation.

Of course the Minister and Secretary must be members of the Government ; yet the interests of the country clearly require that there should be an element placing a check upon the navy being made an instrument of party, as well as on the false economy too often practised to the public injury ; it is reasonable to believe that a Council without executive functions, but invested with a continuous existence, to be consulted when the estimates are framed, and on all important questions, would ensure an amount of steadiness and consistency in the conduct of affairs which can never be exercised so long as the interests of the navy and of the country, are left to a governing body under the control of party politicians, too often striving to outbid their predecessors for popularity by partial changes or unconsidered retrenchments detrimental to the service, and often entailing great additional expense eventually ; the recorded opinion of the Council as to the estimates to be proposed by the Minister to the Cabinet, and with its authority to the House of Commons, would be a considerable check on the tendency last-mentioned.

With these objects, and in order to give the Minister

the benefit of the best professional advice on all questions which may arise, it is proposed to afford him the assistance of a Naval Council, consisting partly of rising young officers, to qualify the views of those of more mature experience, with the opinions of men whose minds are more accessible to new impressions, who may better appreciate the present, and who look more to the future.

A body of men is never suited to executive duties, and the functions of the "Council of the Navy" should be therefore consultative and deliberative.

The Minister would have the advantage of their opinions upon all questions, which should be recorded, but the Minister should be free to act independently of them, unless it should be thought fit, in some special and exceptional matters, to require the concurrence of the Council.

The Council, it is proposed, should consist of the Minister as president.

The Head of the Executive would be Vice-president, with four naval officers, each appointed for five years, who should go out in rotation, and be ineligible for re-appointment until after a certain period of active service. This arrangement would give a certain character of permanence, wholly wanting in the Admiralty as now constituted, while it would prevent the stagnation of ideas that a complete absence of change might occasion.

In proposals of changes affecting either of the great departments, it would be desirable that the head thereof should attend with a seat at the Council; and when occasion required, the head of a particular branch of

such departments should also be summoned to assist in the discussion, but without a vote.

When projects involving great organic changes originate with the Minister, the country should have the benefit of the Minister's opinion, and that of his Council, separately, in order to ensure that no measure of importance should be adopted without the security of recorded reasons and opinions, after ample consideration.

On the other hand, the Council should also be allowed to take the initiative, in proposing changes and improvements for the consideration of the Minister.

Perhaps, however, the most important advantage to be expected from the Council would be the means it would afford for the investigation of difficult subjects which are now either wholly neglected, or turned over to irresponsible commissions out of doors, composed often of persons who have never given any consideration to the matters on which, after a brief inquiry, they are expected to pronounce an authoritative opinion.

The Council, in fact, would form a standing Commission of Inquiry, which would be in the highest degree competent to deal with all those subjects which have been recently submitted to inquiries more or less unsatisfactory, as well as those numerous other matters so urgently requiring immediate attention.

Should it be observed that the constitution of the Council closely resembles that of the French Conseil d'Amirauté, if we apply to their system the same tests as have been

herein previously applied to our own, this circumstance will afford little reason for refusing it fair consideration.

It may be necessary to repeat that it is purposely intended, for the reasons before stated, merely to sketch in outline this plan of naval re-construction, but should the principles be worthy of attention there would be no difficulty in filling up the details.

The annexed tabular form will show at one view the nature of the proposed measures of reconstruction. (Vide APPENDIX.)

POSTSCRIPT.

THE gratifying reception of the first edition of this work is due to its appearance, when the rising tide of public dissatisfaction was becoming too strong to be longer withstood, and because it conveyed useful information on the Navy, at an opportune moment.

It has received the favourable notice of a large and influential portion of the press, while the principles on which the reform of the system should be based, laid down in a hasty, and avowedly imperfect sketch, have been embodied in Sir James Elphinstone's resolutions, drawn up, as we are informed, by several distinguished Naval Officers, thus proving that those views are concurred in by many who are well able to form a sound judgment on the subject.

As a matter of the greatest public importance is involved, a few words are offered in reply to the observations of Sir Francis Baring in the House of Commons on Friday last ; in the first place, the writer ventures to say that he is so impressed with the responsibility involved in

the task he has undertaken, that he dared not have attempted it, except with the firm resolution to state what he believes to be the whole truth affecting the very existence of England, without disguise or qualification, fear or favour.

While determined to "nothing extenuate nor set down aught in malice," he did not inquire the particular Board, or individuals who were in Office when measures, which he thinks mistaken, were pursued. Had he allowed personal interests or considerations to influence him, the book would never have been written; and he would have gladly avoided any stricture which would have affected a Statesman, whose administration of Naval affairs has left behind it so strong an impress of honesty of purpose, as that of the Right Honourable Baronet.

Referring to this work, but evidently attributing it to some higher source than its true one, Sir Francis observes, "In a pamphlet which is supposed to come from very high authority, and to express the views of a considerable number of Naval Officers, great blame is attached to the Board of Admiralty for the harbours of refuge, and it is said that if the constitution of the Admiralty had been altered, we never should have had these harbours of refuge. I do not say whether these harbours of refuge are right or wrong, *but it is the constitution of England you ought to inquire into if you want to alter that.* They arose from a Committee of this House. An address for a Commission was agreed to. A Commission was appointed. The Royal Commission, and not the

“ Admiralty, heard evidence. They did not employ any
“ Admiralty Surveyors whatever. They had Mr. Rennie,
“ Mr. Cubitt, and Mr. Walker, and WHEN IT WAS ALL
“ SETTLED, IT WAS HANDED OVER TO THE BOARD OF AD-
“ MIRALTY TO CARRY OUT THE WISHES OF THE HOUSE OF
“ COMMONS.” (Hear, hear.)

It can hardly be disputed that works (miscalled Harbours of Refuge) created for the purposes of national defence in war, are proper objects of Admiralty administration, and if radically wrong in the original plan, or if so carried out as to fail to effect the objects for which they were devised, the blame would necessarily fall on the Executive Government; while nothing can more signally show the want of a due sense of practical responsibility, which it has been the principal object of this work to prove, than such a defence.

Sir Francis Baring says that it is not the constitution of the Admiralty, but the Constitution of England that must be altered if we would call in question the Harbours of Refuge, since these harbours were constructed by the authority of the House of Commons.

Is it intended to assert that the Admiralty foresaw that a million and a half of money would be thrown away in these harbours, or that they would be useless for the purposes proposed, and that nevertheless the Executive Government held itself bound to construct them, and was wholly irresponsible for the result, because it was the supposed wish of the House?

This is indeed a strange view of the Constitution, and

one fraught with peculiar danger to the country ; it is one, moreover, which the House of Commons could never acknowledge ; for what would be its position as the guardian of the public purse, or how could it fulfil its duty of watching over the Executive Government, and bringing to account its errors and shortcomings, if the Executive Government could justify itself, in such a matter as these harbours, by saying, " We have no responsibility, we are bound to follow the wish of the House of Commons, and we wash our hands of all consequences ? "

Every one knows the immense power of that great assembly, and that what it seriously wills, the other branches of the legislature will in vain attempt to resist ; but it is not possible to conceive any more signal illustration of the importance of keeping in sight the great landmarks of the Constitution, than this declaration of an experienced and eminent statesman, that the responsibility of the Executive Government for acts involving a large public expenditure, has been superseded by the direct action of the House itself !

The present position of the prospects of Naval Inquiry is very remarkable, and the withdrawal of the traditional opposition of the Admiralty would seem like a surrender, had not subsequent occurrences given it a different aspect.

The facts stated in these pages are known to the whole service ; they have not been disputed, and they are known to be indisputable ; it is therefore to be regretted that a prolonged delay should occur in a

matter so pressing, as the repair of defects in the most important element of national defence ; and a tremendous responsibility will rest on the Executive Government, with whom the duty of providing the remedy lies, if a laborious inquiry into what is already so well known, should have the effect of putting off the reconstruction of Naval administration from the present period of calm, to one possibly of European trouble and disturbance.

If, however, the proposed course is to be abided by, it is the bounden duty of the Government, and of Parliament, to secure the fullest and most impartial investigation into the present system ; and on a question of such immense national importance, inquiry by Select Committee should be instituted by both Houses of Parliament.

The greatest care should be taken to render it impossible for party or personal feeling to obstruct a complete analysis of the subject, and it is certain that no political capital can be made out of the inquiry into the past, for all parties under an evil system have shared in bringing things to their present condition ; but the Remedy is indeed worthy of the highest aspirations of a statesman, and will entitle those who devote themselves to it with honest straightforwardness of purpose to the gratitude of the nation.

It is true that the evils we deplore are due to the system-rather than to individuals ; but it is not in human nature when measures are criticised, such for example as those Sir Francis Baring has noticed, that the statesman who was First Lord of the Admiralty at the time, should

not feel himself personally concerned ; while on the other hand the evidence of all those who have held that high office, would be of indispensable importance to any satisfactory inquiry.

For these reasons it is earnestly trusted that, (according to the proposals of Admiral Duncombe), the Committee will be composed of gentlemen who are in no degree identified with the subjects submitted to their scrutiny, and that they may have full opportunity of obtaining the fullest information, especially by means of the evidence of all those who have held this office.

It would be indeed a mockery to commit an inquiry directed to lay bare the faults and defaults of Naval Administration to the very persons who are responsible for them, and who, from their official experience, would have a leading influence over the whole investigation.

There is no desire in any quarter to make attacks on individuals, and there is a general admission that effective administration was impossible under the system they were bound by ; but it would be to sacrifice the public interest if those so much interested in the inquiry were allowed virtually to conduct it ; and in conformity with the principles which have prompted these pages, the writer will not shrink from lifting up his humble voice against their being appointed judge and jury in their own case.

It is of great importance that the Parliamentary Committees should be able to sift to the very bottom the present system, most especially in its results as shown by the

actual state and condition of the great interests of the Navy ; but should their Reports comprehend a scheme of reconstruction, Sir Francis Baring's speech is a sufficient warning that, for the sake of the most valued principles of the Constitution, the House of Commons should keep itself free to judge dispassionately of the remedy, when tried by experience, by avoiding any course which might enable the Executive Government to defend itself at some future period, in case of failure, by saying that the responsibility rested, not on ministers (past or present), but on the House of Commons, whose conclusions it had no choice but to fulfil.

March 6, 1861.

APPENDIX.

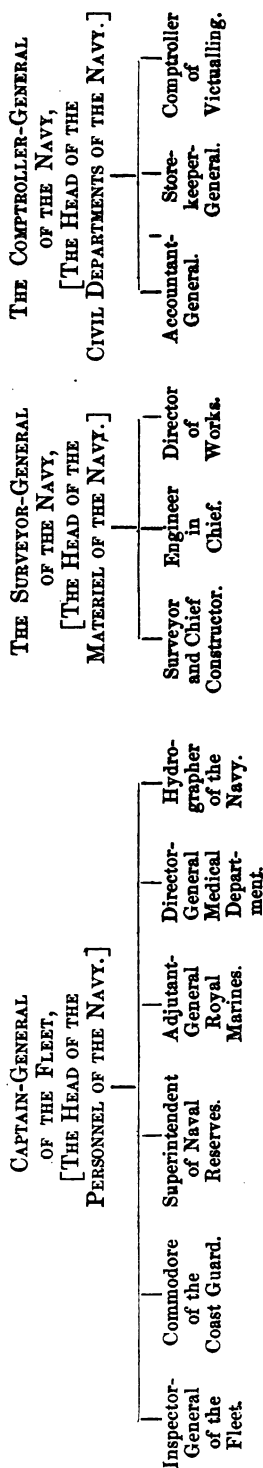
ADMINISTRATION OF THE NAVY.

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE NAVY (Cabinet Minister).
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Council of the Navy.

THE MINISTER (President),
CAPTAIN-GENERAL OF THE FLEET (Vice-President),
FOUR NAVAL OFFICERS (each appointed for five years, and going out in rotation).

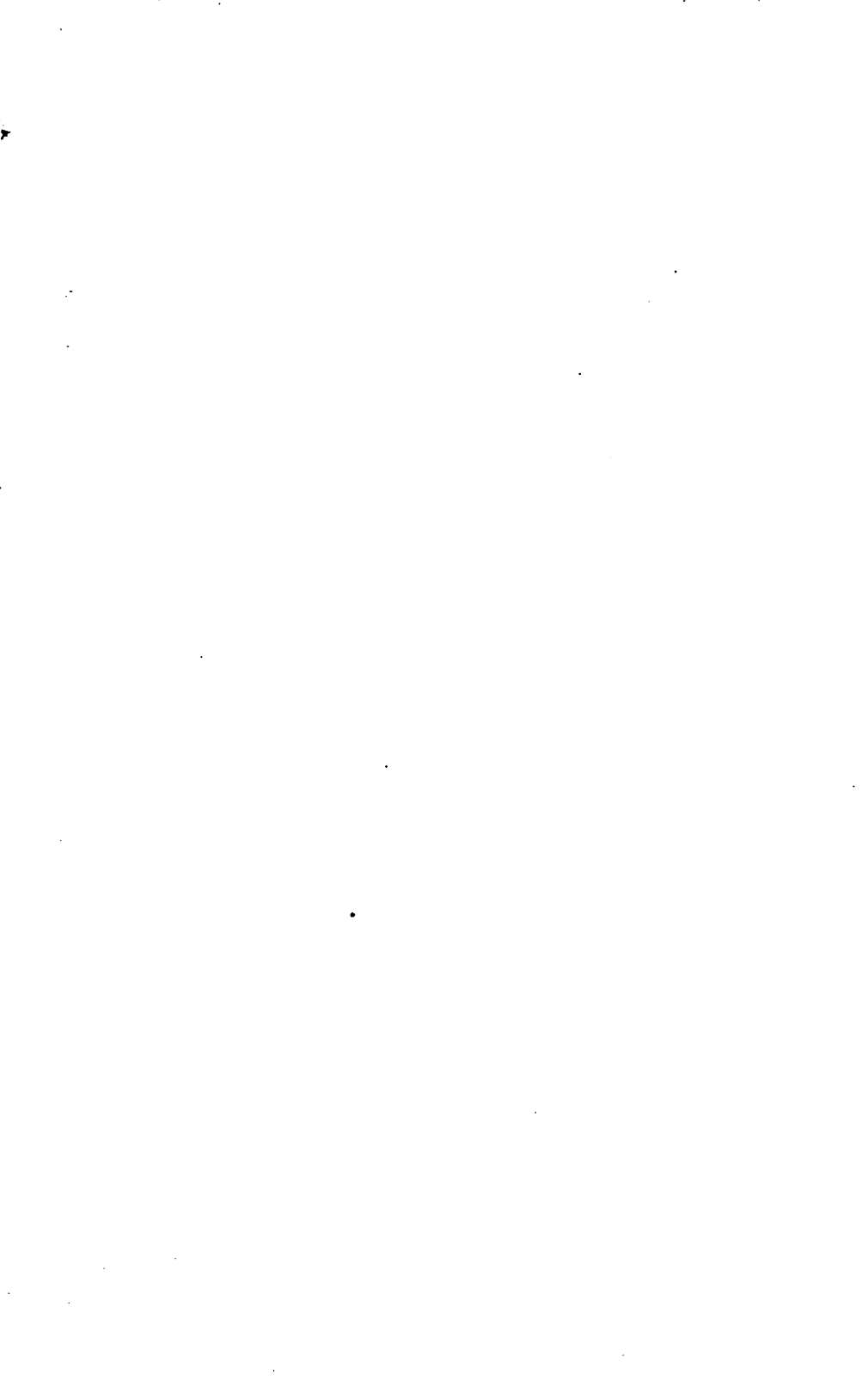
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